OTHER HANDS

The International Journal for Middle-earth Gaming

Issue 8: January 1995

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Editorial: vision or illusion?

So, where is this "role-playing in Middle-earth" thing going anyway? Every game concept (potentially) has a chance for its moment in the limelight, when all the world (or at least the greater part of the gaming world) is seized with sudden interest and excitement at something new, innovative, or striking; when a particular rule system or world achieves notoriety beyond the narrow confines of its introverted cult following; when its adherents feel as though the endless hours of imaginative energy they have invested into that world have become a part of something larger, something of value over and above the simple enjoyment of role-playing. Has this moment already passed for Middle-earth? Was it ever there in the first place? Is there a future for this passion or will it, like us, one day fade into obscurity?

This is a question I have been asking myself for a long time, and it may well be that *Other Hands* was conceived in part as a space for answering that question. For before one can even presume to contemplate such a thing, there must be some sense, some suspension of disbelief, that a network of Middle-earth gamers exists at all. Many may think this an unnecessarily extreme point of entry to take, but it rings true with my experience at any rate.

Think about it. How many people do you know who actually role-play in Middle-earth on a regular basis or as their primary game—as compared with, say, how many people play *Dungeons & Dragons,* or *Cyberpunk,* or *Call of Cthulhu,* or V*ampire?* In my own experience, not many. It is my impression that Middle-earth gaming is in truth quite marginal to both the fantasy role-playing world on the one hand, and to Tolkien fandom on the other.

With the former, Tolkien's world is, I think, largely absorbed into the by now thoroughly generic conventions and expectations of heroic fantasy (conventions and expectations which Tolkien's own writings helped shape) such that, whatever may be its actual merits, in the minds of the vast majority of gamers, Middle-earth simply rehearses (if even in exemplary fashion) those conventions.

Things are not so different in the realms of international Tolkien fandom. Although a burgeoning new interest in Tolkien exists now in Europe, it has been my experience that Tolkien enthusiasts are all too often turned in upon themselves in their struggle to champion the genius of Tolkien's writings to a literary establishment that was never listening in the first place, and to a general public whose once energetic slogans of "Frodo lives!" and "Gandalf for president" have long since become cultural artifacts of the 70's. I do not want to paint a wholly negative picture of Tolkien fandom—great advances have been made and continue to be

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Submission Deadline for next issue:

March 15, 1995

made in many fields of inquiry and enjoyment—but in all of this, role-playing has had small part, being typically viewed as one of the many haute-vulgarizations of Holy Writ.

So where does this leave *Other Hands* and its 23 paying subscribers, scattered across seven countries throughout the globe? We may be few in number, but we are persistent; and we have a forum that will be around so long as there are voices to fill it. But what of the future, the undiscovered country? There is certainly much work to be done. If Middle-earth gaming has the potential for greatness (or, more modestly stated, the capacity to become something of lasting value to gamers and Tolkien fans alike), then the remainder of this final decade of the century (and, indeed, of the millennium!) will be the time for us to lay the groundwork.

The massive revision project of Iron Crown's Middle-earth series is certainly a step in the right direction, as is the publication of the first ever MERP campaign module. But the real task at hand still lies with us, the readers and contributors of *Other Hands,* to define the underlying nature and unique character of the fantasy setting we have chosen for ourselves.

By "uniqueness" I do not mean to appeal to any particular quality—real or imagined— inherent in Tolkien's world. Instead, what truly distinguishes Middle-earth from all other fantasy gaming worlds is what we as gamers choose to give it. Tolkien has provided us with a canvas to paint upon; but in the last analysis, we cannot presume to rely upon the alleged virtues of that literary edifice if we hope to create a game setting that will advance beyond rehearsing the litanies of the past. It is only on the basis of this realization that an opportunity exists for us to raise a voice that will someday be heard in the world outside.

And now on to the introductions for this issue. We are grateful to the Tolkien Society (UK) for granting us permission to reprint a fine pair of essays from Mallorn, their annual publication. Both of these articles were written by Michael Hickman, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at a Tolkien Society seminar in 1990. Michael has an extensive background in the comparative study of religion, and his articles (the second of which will be appearing next issue) are incisive treatments of religious practices in Middle-earth. As such, they deserve to be made more accessible to the gaming community.

The first of these articles, which appears in this issue, focuses on the Dúnedain. This is an important, ground-breaking study, which drives home the central point I attempted to make in my own article in OH 2; namely, that no disembedded religious institutions or personnel exist in Middle-earth because the priestly role is—and, indeed, only can be—fully manifested in and performed by the King and those to whom he chooses to delegate sacral power. To be sure, other channels of divine power will exist alongside the person of the King, but such "spiritual" hierarchies would follow a parallel principle of organization. In this way, Hickman's article may serve as a paradigm for developing religious structures among other peoples of Middle-earth.

The next piece we have in this issue is by Deena McKinney, editor of the role-playing magazine *MOTiVE* which, as the bibliography she has provided us shows, contains a substantial amount of Tolkien-related material. Deena has been running a game based in the far northeastern corner of Middle-earth (based on the ICE map), and has written a brief campaign oudine. It is always interesting to see what sort of settings people choose for their Middle-earth games, especially if these are exotic or unfamiliar. I would encourage more of our readers to share their own campaign ideas with us in future issues.

The other way to share ideas is through adventure scenarios, and we have two to offer you in this issue. The first, by our resident artist Jeff Hatch, is a classic murder mystery set in Arthedain in T.A. 1450. The second, by Torquil Gault, is a magic item quest set in eastern Eriador in T.A. 1643. We hope you enjoy both.

Finally, we have been graced with reviews of two new MERP products: the Palantír Quest campaign and the revised Moria citadel module. If you own a copy of a 2nd edition Iron Crown publication that has not yet been reviewed in *Other Hands,* please take it upon yourself to do so. We want to have a diversity of critical voices commenting on the most recent work by ICE, as it is an effective medium for giving them constructive feedback on their efforts to improve the Middle-earth line.

Chris Seeman
January 1, 1995

MAE CULPA: ERRATA FOR *OTHER HANDS* 6/7

The page bar for last issue incorrectly read "Issue 5 April 1994."

p. 7 "It is a relatively simple task for most referees to conjure up crazed fanatics in black robes worshipping Darkness around a blood-stained altar [not "alter"]."

p.12 "she hated all making, all colours and elaborate adornment, wearing only black and silver and living in bare [not "bear"] chambers."

p. 26 "Umbarean merchants provide rare and exotic woods, herbs, spices, silks, precious substances not generally available in Eriador (such as pearls [not "perils"]), and manufactured/crafted goods from around the world."

p. 26 "Trade ties between Umbar and the people of Eriador date from the first founding of Númenórean colonies in Middle-earth. As the Númenóreans became estranged from the elves, that portion of Umbarean trade diminished, but never ceased. The practical merchants of Umbar never let biases, personal enmity or outright hostility interfere with lucrative trading relationships except when the risks outweighed the potential gain."

FINE PRINT

Other Hands is an international gaming journal devoted to fantasy role-playing set in J.R.R. Tolkien's secondary world of Middle-earth. It is a quarterly, nonprofit publication welcoming submissions dealing with any aspect of gaming in the context of Tolkien's world: scenario ideas, rule suggestions, gaming product reviews, gamemastering aids, bibliographic resources, essays on Middle-earth, and whatever else our readership would like to see in print. In a word, Other Hands aims to be the definitive Tolkien-related gaming journal for a worldwide role-playing community. Within the pages of Other Hands, the interested gamer may publish materials with reference to any game mechanics he or she chooses (including Rolemaster and Middle-earth Role Playing). Such gaming material may deal with any time period of Tolkien's world, and need not be bound to what has already seen print in Iron Crown's modules. Other Hands provides this freedom because it is a nonprofit publication. Subscription rates are as follows: inside the USA—1 issue $3/4 issues $12; outside the USA—surface 1 issue $3.50/4 issues $14—air 1 issue $4.50/4 issues $18. Payment should be made to Chris Seeman: PO Box 1213, Novato, CA 94948, USA. No Eurochecks, please!

Submissions are welcome in any form (preferably legible), but are easiest to edit when received on a floppy disk. Word for Windows is the editing software currently in use, so if there is any question as to the readability of your disk, please save your document in ASCII or text-only format and include a hard copy. All submitted materials remain the copyright of the author unless we are otherwise informed. All submissions must be sent to Chris Seeman: PO Box 1213, Novato, CA 94948 (USA). Please write me or call if you encounter any difficulties, my phone number is (415) 892-9066. Please note also that I may be reached over Internet: chris1224@aol.com

COMMUNICATIONS

***Dear friends of* Other Hands,**

I enjoy reading your magazine greatly. I think it is not only interesting but also useful. But, as you will read, I don't think that your goal (relating Tolkien to role-playing games) is an easy one.

I have been playing role-playing games (RPGs) for more than six years. This means that, although *D&D* is my favorite system, "dungeon-crawling and monster-smashing" became boring to me long ago. When I discovered *MERP* I got confused: was it possible to visit Middle-earth through gaming? Could I talk with Legolas in Mirkwood or meet the mythic Gandalf the Grey?

I didn't believe it could happen but I decided to try…a few times. And up to this moment I have never played a game in Tolkien's Middle-earth. Sure, I have enjoyed some—very few—good fantasy adventures but not with the special flavor of real Middle-earth. And I ask myself whether it is possible to play RPGs in Middle-earth. I will not categorically deny it, but there are many factors that make me think it is not.

The first problem I find is Middle-earth's origin. It came into being as a very personal, artistic (literary) creation; that is, an intimate communication between its "sub-creator" and an unknown reader. RPGs are also a kind of art, but they are enjoyed in a group. Middle-earth is an *eMOTiVE* message directed to an individual person (each reader) while role-playing is a social activity. In reading *The Lord of the Rings,* we feel sadness, tenderness, fear and hope, none of which feelings are to be shown in a group whose main goal is to have fun. So, the only Middle-earth we can visit through RPGs is a mutilated one.

The second problem I find is the nature of the game itself. RPGs are a social activity whose goal is to entertain. Fun can be obtained in one of two ways: either by exploring the rules' limits by killing, looting, destroying, and casting impressive spells (thus impersonating a "superself" for some hours); or by playing a well-defined character in a long campaign that lets your character develop a personality by interrelating with other characters—in *other* fantasy worlds, *not* in Middle-earth.

The first way doesn't fit Tolkien's Middle-earth because it requires a great amount and variety of monsters (the stranger, the better), and Endor does not possess a rich fauna in this sense (even when ICE designers invent such ridiculous species as the Kraken or the Umli). It also requires spectacular magic performances, and we all know that Tolkien's world is not a very pyrotechnic setting. Finally, the "Superself" which a player impersonates needs truly heroic deeds and impossible quests to fulfill, but in Middle-earth there are no huge, epic adventures left. So, if your character cannot kill Sauron (Remember, it's Frodo's work!) what is he supposed to do? Of course, you *can* kill Sauron and set fire to Gandalf's beard if you want, but then you are not in Middle-earth but in some other fantasy game setting.

The second way (that is, impersonating a character in a realistic Middle-earth style) is even more difficult. It is possible to play many hours without using your sword (even though most people would find it endlessly boring), but it is not possible to role-play without speaking. You recreate Middle-earth with words, just like Tolkien did, but Tolkien spent his whole life sub-creating. Each word spoken by Aragorn is the result of careful thinking, while in a game session we need to invent our characters' speeches immediately. As a result, our noble Dúnedain speak like modern city dwellers (when they don't use slang words). So, in comparing our Middle-earth with Tolkien's, we get depressed.

We can try a mixture of both ways. We can design exciting adventures in a faithful recreation of Tolkien's Middle-earth, perhaps by filling those *lacunae* that have obsessed us for many years. Usually, these adventures happen in Arnor or Gondor and include some palace intrigue, good exhibitions of swordsmanship, and fighting against Umbar renegades or servants of Angmar. But although such plots are respectful towards Tolkien's data, they are not different from other fantasy settings, while Tolkien's fantasy *is* very different from all other fantasy tales.

That's what I think. But by no means do I wish it to be this way. I would like to discover that role-playing is possible in Middle-earth (not in a pseudo-Italy called Gondor or a kind of Mongolia called Khand). That's why I read *Other Hands* with interest, and that's why I help the roleplaying commission of the Sociedad Tolkien Española as much as I can from my position as its president. If there is a way of producing role-play in Middle-earth, I hope *Other Hands* will help to find it.

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***Dear Chris and* Other Hands,**

As a new subscriber, I wanted to compliment you on the outstanding quality of your publication. Regarding Issue 6/7,1 found most interesting Jason Beresford's articles on Tarma Tar-Calion and Umbarean trade (despite the typos), as well as Anders Blixt's article on Minas Tirith. While the adventures are well done, the essay articles gready appeal to me for two reasons. First, I have found no other forum for discussions of this type and, second, I am fascinated by the creative reasoning the authors apply in reaching their conclusions.

Chris, I agree with your statement that a mock history conjured up by a role-player tends to be more interesting than others since the role-player actually intends to *do* something with it. In other words, if I may paraphrase you, a good mock history (or geography, or economy, etc.) created by a role-player will actually work. Others will participate in the role-playing author's sub-creation and test whether it meets Tolkien's standards of "the inner consistency of reality necessary to induce secondary belief."

Professor Tolkien certainly has created a believable secondary world. We, the "other hands," make the attempt of expanding on his creation. Jason's and Anders' articles both regard Middle-earth as if it were a real place, and apply real world logic in their articles in order to expand the "reality" of it.

I also agree with your position that even Tolkien's writings may be reinterpreted, as Jason did with his Tarma Tar-Calion article. This is especially true when, as in this case, the reinterpre-tation improves upon the consistency of the subject with both the primary and secondary world.

There was, however, one problem. Anders Blixt's article came to the conclusion that Minas Tirith's solitary gate made supply of the city improbable I have to agree that this is quite reasonable, given the evidence available. Professor Tolkien had apparently created a non-working metropolis. This rather undesirable situation has sent me to search through various sources in an attempt to resolve this dilemma and make the unworkable work. I hope to share my findings with you in the future.

Please keep up the good work. I look forward to more thought-provoking articles of this type and hope that other potential authors will share their discoveries about Middle-earth.

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Dear Chris,

I found the piece on "Innate Magic" in Issue 6/7 a particularly inspiring one, and I am very pleased that die Tarma-Tar-Calion problem would seem to be resolved to everybody's satisfaction. Your own adventure certainly also counts among the highlights of the issue. However, my opinion is that it really only makes sense to run it as part of a more comprehensive campaign. For while the plot itself is pretty straightforward, the circumstances of the player-characters' involvement require rather careful preparation, otherwise the adventure may be more than half-over before the players get the feel of what is going on or even to figure out just who is who in the adventure.

On innate magic in Middle-earth there also has appeared an article by Marcus Wevers, whom I don't know otherwise, in the October issue of *Windgeflüster,* the national role-player's guild quarterly [see bibliography addendum in this issue *of OH*]. With this same issue a flyer fell into my hands advertising the activities of the guild's recently-constituted Tolkien study group. I don't know whether you're already in contact with any of those people (I still have to get in touch myself). Apparently one of their principal aims (which, it would seem, they share with the role-playing section of the Sociedad Tolkien Española, according to Eduardo's letter in OH 5) is to devise a more Tolkien-suited set of gaming rules than the present *MERP* ones. Their November workshop will deal with, as you might have guessed, magic in Middle-earth.

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MOTiVE Bibliography

Bibliography of Middle-earth materials appearing in the gaming journal MOTiVE

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David Wendleken—Raid on Lauremar (adventure with historical background and setting)
David Wendleken—Relics of Middle Earth: Luindae (magic item)

Issue 5

David Wendleken—Sultase: A Middle Earth Martial Arts Form
David Wendleken—Middle Earth Entertainment
David Wendleken—Personalities of Northwest Endor (NPCs)
Edward Sleight—Sauron: A Philosophy of Evil
Edward Sleight—Personalities and Organizations of Endor

Issue 7

David Wendleken—Love Conquers All (adventure scenario)
David Wendleken—Treasures of Middle Earth: Annalissa (magic item)
Edward Sleight—Sauron: A Philosophy of Evil, Part II
Edward Sleight—Rhymes from the Shadows (poems as dues for adventures in Middle-earth)

Issue 8

David Wendleken—Heartstrings: Minstrel and Bard Spells
Edward Sleight—Sauron: A Philosophy of Evil, Part III
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David Wendleken—Treasures of Middle Earth: Sulindo and Serelinde David Wendleken—Making Items of Power David Wendleken—Personalities in Northwest Endor, Continued
David Wendleken—Timeline for Carnemirie Galantiriel (PC timeline)

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Edward Sleight—Sauron's Helpful Hints for Humans
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Edward Sleight—Dursuel: MERP Villain
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David Wendleken—Personalities of Endor, Continued
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Deena McKinney—A Letter from Elrith (fiction)

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David Wendleken—The No-Win Scenario for MERP

Issue 13

David Wendleken—Treasures of Middle Earth: Lanni
David Wendleken—Campaign History (our campaign) Deena McKinney—Clothes of the Elves

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David Wendleken—Magic in Middle Earth David Wendleken—Machiavellian Elves in Middle Earth
David Wendleken—Treasures of Middle Earth

Issue 15

David Wendleken—Memories and Tales in the Dark (fiction)
Deena McKinney—The Wedding of Elrith (fiction)

Issue 16

Brad Townsend—Fealin's Accounting of the Withered Heath (fiction)
Deena McKinney—Tolkien's Elves

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David Wendleken—Short Adventure Ideas
David Wendleken—Treasures of Middle Earth

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Deena McKinney—Middle Earth for Fantasy Hero: Roleplaying in Arthedain, 1970 Third Age
Deena McKinney—Elrith's Disgrace (fiction)
David Wendleken—An Herbal Infusion (scenario)

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Deena McKinney—The Miller's Tale (scenario)
David Wendleken—Magic and Elves in Middle Earth

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David Wendleken—Treasures of Middle Earth: Eärnur's Banner
Wayne Crotts—The Tale of Carigorn (precursor to scenario)

Issue 24

Wayne Crotts—The Spears of Savaron (scenario)

Issue 25

Deena McKinney—The Myr Campaign
David Wendleken—Privy to Death (fiction)

Issue 26

Deena McKinney—The Assassin, the Thief, His Lover and the Mage (scenario)
Deena McKinney—A Nightmare for Melyanna and The Fugitive of Gondor (scenarios)

Issue 27

David Wendleken—Cold War in Arthedain (fiction)

Bibliography Addendum

Fredrik Ekman "'Excuse me; how do I get from the tunnel like hall to the gates of Mordor?' or The Art of Squeezing the Literary Masterpieces of this Century Into a Computer Game" *Beyond Bree* October, 1994: 2-5; November 1994: 2-7

Hartley Patterson "Dungeons of Middle-earth" *Amon Hen* 80: 17-18 [review *ofMERP*]

Eduardo Martinez Santamaria "Other Hands: Un ejemplo a seguir" *Estel* 1994: 23-25

Marcus Wevers "Magie in Mittelerde" *Windgeflüster* 1994: 40-43

FRONTLINES

We are currently standing at the threshold of several new Middle-earth publications by Iron Crown Enterprises. The *Dol Guldur* citadel module has just gone to press, and the *Elves* people supplement will be back from the printer's pretty soon. A *Hobbit* boardgame is supposed to come out in February. Later 1995 releases will include *Laketown* city module in March, and (tentatively) a *Shire* realm module in May.

The Kin-strife campaign module is slated for release sometime this February, and it should run 240 pages or so. The interior artwork will be by Kent Burles and David Martin, while the cover art will be a republication of Angus McBride's cover to the 1989 *Middle-earth Adventure Guidebook II* (which depicts Castamir's sack of Osgiliath in T.A. 1437). In all, the *Kin-strife* contains a total of 21 full-length adventure scenarios, each of which are set in or near one of Gondor's seven principal cities during the Usurper's reign (T.A. 1437-1447). The three final adventures are set respectively in Dunfearan, Rhovanion, and in an indeterminate urban center in Gondor (GM's option). Accompanying these adventures is a lengthy introductory chapter which details the history of the civil war and its effects on Gondor.

The *Southern Gondor* module is currently scheduled to be completed by April, which would place its release date at sometime in the fall of 1995. This realm module will cover all the lands of Gondor south of the White Mountains: Andrast, Anfalas, Belfalas, Morthond, Lamedon, Lebennin, South Ithilien, Tolfalas, and Harondor. The remaining lands under Dúnadan hegemony will be covered in the *Umbar* module and in a projected *Northern Gondor* companion module (both of which are in preparation). *Southern Gondor* will incorporate, revise, and expand upon materials previously published in *Sea-lords of Gondor, Havens of Gondor, Erech and the Paths of the Dead,* and *Haunted Ruins of the Dunlendings.* The module will also include two chapter-length mini-campaigns as well as some sixteen shorter adventure scenarios designed to give added flavor to each of Gondor's various regions.

I just got off the phone with Jason Beresford, who says that about 50% of the *Umbar* realm module has been written (some sections of it being more complete than others). Jason's work involves a significantly larger magnitude of original thought and labor than the other realm module projects, since (unlike the materials making up the bulk of the *Arnor* and *Gondor* modules) the original 1982 *Umbar* publication focused almost exclusively on the city of Umbar itself, leaving its surrounding territory largely undescribed. Jason related to me that he plans to include four or five adventure scenarios of variable length in the finished module, but no foreseeable date for the completion has yet been given.

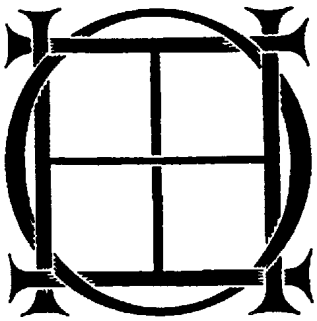
Reporter: Chris Seeman

The Religious Rituals of the Dúnedain of Gondor

Michael R. Hickman

Men were the Atani, the Second People, who followed the Elves in Middle-earth. There were many races of Men but the group that is the subject of this article is the Dúnedain of Gondor [the records of Arnor are too few to be able to comment properly but it can be assumed that they were similar]. The Dúnedain were descended from those races who lived with the Elves in Beleriand and to whom the Valar had given a home, free from the cares of Middle-earth, in the island of Elenna at the end of the First Age as reward for their help and sufferings in the struggle against Morgoth.

On Elenna they learnt much from visitors from the West and developed the Númenórean civilisation, which was the highest attained by any race of Men. The records of, and comments on, this civilisation contain the most specific and explicit account of religious ritual and practice of any of the Free Peoples and it is worth summarising them as they form the basis for beliefs and rituals of the Dúnedain of Gondor.[1]



There seems to be no or very little Dúnadan ritual at the time of the War of the Ring for Tolkien comments that Eru Ilúvatar

> …had at the time of the War of the Ring no worship and no hallowed place… the refusal to worship any 'creature', and above all no 'dark lord' or satanic demon, Sauron, or any other, was almost as far as they [the Dúnedain] got. They had (I imagine) no petitionary prayers to God; but preserved the vestige of thanksgiving (Letters: 206).

In the same letter he goes on to write that

> …with the reemergence (sic) of the lineal priest kings (of whom Lúthien the Blessed Elf-Maiden was a foremother) the worship of God would be renewed, and His Name (or title) be again more often heard (ibid: 206—207).

The purpose of this article is to try to work out the kind of rituals that the Dúnedain performed and those that would have been re-established by Aragorn-Elessar.[2]

The method that I shall adopt is that under each section I shall give a summary of Númenórean practice during the first two millennia of the Second Age; relate it to Dúnadan practice during the Third Age explaining the changes, if any, that the Dúnedain made; and then try to reconstruct the ritual re-established by Aragorn-Elessar. It can be assumed safely that the Dúnedain followed Númenórean practice wherever possible. They were an extremely traditional society who looked back naturally to a golden age of high Númenórean culture. In such a society where ideas and forms changed very slowly and where such value was placed upon sheer antiquity, Dúnadan ritual (ritual by its very nature, is conservative), would have followed its Númenórean form as closely as possible.

The role of the Númenórean Monarch was crucial and I shall deal with the beliefs surrounding them and the rituals they performed in some detail in order to understand the corresponding role of Dúnedain Monarchs and Aragorn-Elessar in particular.[3]

Basic Belief

The Númenóreans were pure monotheists. They worshipped Eru Ilúvatar and rejected any kind of physical representation of their deity. The Dúnedain retained the pure monotheism of their ancestors.

The Monarch

The Númenóreans were ruled by a line of priest-monarchs (both men and women could become ruler) whose ancestors not only included Men from the Three Houses of the Edain but also Elves from all Three Kindreds and the Maia Melian. These priest-monarchs were therefore also a sacred line whose ancestry marked them apart from their fellow Númenóreans. In addition their ancestor Elros Tar-Minyatur had been appointed as Monarch by the Valar and so was Monarch by "Divine Right." Consequently, the status of the Monarchs of Númenor was as priest-monarch, sacred-monarch, and divine-right ruler. As such they regarded all other rulers outside Valinor, except certain Eldar such as Gil-galad, as their inferiors. Gil-galad seems to have been treated as an equal.[4]

The Dúnedain continued this concept of the status of the Monarch. No one who was not of the line of Elendil, himself of the line of Elros, could be accepted as King. Faramir explained this situation to Frodo when he pointed out that Boromir had asked their father, Denethor, Steward of Gondor, "How many hundreds of years needs it to make a steward a king, if the king returns not?" only to receive the reply, "Few years in other places of less royalty. In Gondor ten thousand years would not suffice (LotR II: 278)."

The only difference, which did not affect the ritual role of the Monarch, was that in Arnor and Gondor only Men could succeed, although Arnor claimed that descent through the female line was permissible to make a King.[5]

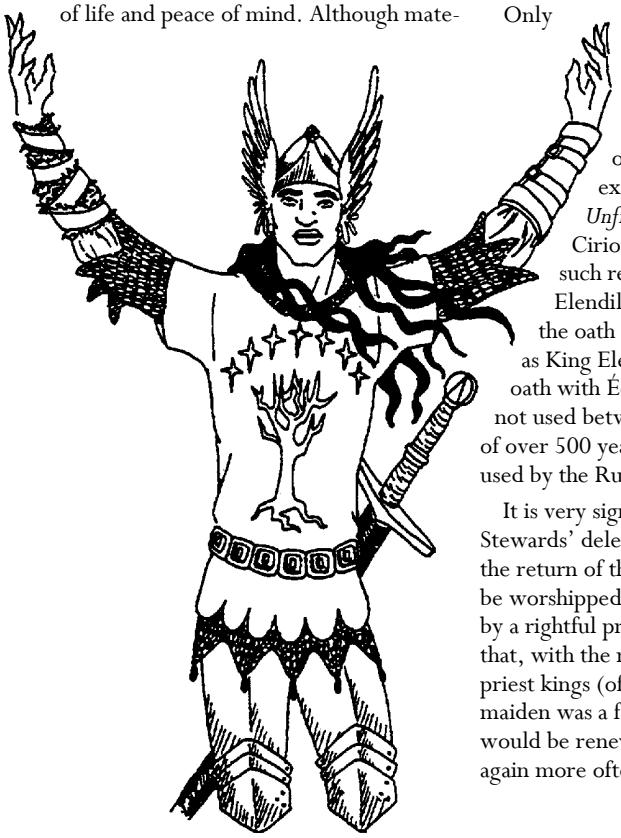
The Ritual Functions of the Priest-Monarchs of Númenor

In his or her role as priest-monarch the Númenórean ruler had a number of functions. This priestly role is best understood in five ways: 1) as *representative* of the people to Eru Ilúvatar, 2) as *mediator* between the people and Eru Ilúvatar, 3) as *enabler* for Númenor to work in harmony, 4) as *repository* of lore and wisdom and, as such, 5) as *teacher* of the people.

As the *representative* of the people to Eru Ilúvatar, the Númenórean Monarch would offer prayers of supplication, praise and thanksgiving to Eru Ilúvatar at the three great festivals.

As *mediator* between the people and Eru Ilúvatar, the Monarch could call Eru Ilúvatar to act as witness and only he/she could utter the sacred name of Eru Ilúvatar.

As *enabler,* the Númenórean Monarch may have had a role analogous to that of the Inca or Pharaoh, that by their prayers the fertility of the land and the good harvest of the people would be ensured.[6] After the reign of Tar-Ancalimon (thed S.A. 2386), "the offering of the first fruits to Eru was neglected (Sil: 266)." But it was not until the rebellion of Ar-Pharazôn that the weather in Númenor grew far worse and events and seasons became disharmonious. It would seem therefore that Númenor was unaffected physically by the cessation of the regular prayer but that a better understanding of the enabling role is seen in giving the Númenóreans quality of life and peace of mind. Although material prosperity continued and increased, the ending of the Royal offering of prayer meant that "the bliss of Westernesse became diminished (ibid)."



As *repository* of lore, several of the early Númenórean Monarchs were held in high esteem and regard. Vardamir, the second King (in theory), was called Nólimon for diis very reason.[7] The fourth King, Tar-Elendil, collected and committed to writing the stuthes of Vardamir, and was consequendy called Parmaite. Tar-Meneldur who succeeded him took his name from his love of star-lore.[8]

As *teacher,* the early Númenórean Monarchs learned much from the Eldar and passed on such knowledge in addition to encouraging the Eldar to teach their fellow-Númenóreans. Quenya was an important subject in early Númenor, for cultural, historical and liturgical reasons.

The Ritual Functions of the Kings and Stewards of Gondor

These five roles were continued by the Númenóreans in exile. Only the King of Gondor could go to the hallow on Mount Mindolluin and offer prayers and thanks on behalf of the people. Tolkien comments that the "'hallow' on Mount Mindolluin [was] only approachable by the King, where he had anciently offered thanks and praise on behalf of his people (Letters: 206)."

Only the King had the authority to call Eru Ilúvatar to witness, even Gandalf in crowning Aragorn-Elessar only invokes the Valar LotRIII:246). However, on one occasion only this authority was exercised by a Ruling Steward. In *Unfinished Tales* is recorded that Cirion, the Steward of Gondor and as such representative of the lost line of Elendil, used the Name when making the oath with Eorl (UT: 305). Aragorn, as King Elessar, used it on renewing that oath with Éomer (ibid: 317, n.44). It was not used between those two occasions, a gap of over 500 years and seems not to have been used by the Ruling Stewards earlier.[9]

It is very significant that, for all the Rulings Stewards' delegated authority, it was only widi the return of the King that Eru Ilúvatar could be worshipped properly and His Name uttered by a rightful priest-king. Tolkien comments that, with the re-establishment "of the lineal priest kings (of whom Luthien the Blessed Elf-maiden was a fore-mother) the worship of God would be renewed, and His Name (or title) be again more often heard (Letters: 206-207)."

There are many references in *The Lord of the Rings* to the collections of lore held at Minas Tirith. Both Boromir and Gandalf refer to them at the Council of Elrond although Boromir does not seem to have read them much and to have relied on his father (LotR I: 265-266). Some of this lore was secret as Faramir indicated to Frodo and Denethor seems to have been reluctant to pass on his own knowledge (LotR II: 279). The collections of ancient wisdom were the responsibility of the Kings and the Ruling Stewards as was teaching the secrets to their heirs as Isildur instructed Meneldil at Amon Anwar (UT: 308-310).

The Dúnedain Kings were also teachers in a wider sense. As keepers of the ancient wisdom they taught, or were responsible for ensuring the teaching of, this wisdom to ensure that the exiled Númenóreans remained true to the faidi, especially in the knowledge of the True God (Letters: 206).

Faramir told Frodo that Gondor had remained free from the "evil arts" and that the "Nameless One" had not been named in honour there, or at least there was no record of such actions (LotR II: 286). This wisdom "remained long in the realm of the sons of Elendil the Fair (ibid)," and it still lingered there although it had much declined to Faramir's great regret.

For all Faramir's regret it is a sign of the effectiveness of the long tradition of teaching that the Dúnedain of Gondor had rejected Sauron, that they spoke Sindarin, that Beregond was able to express some of the depth of Númenórean history to Pippin and that they were willing to continue to resist Sauron in a seemingly impossible war (LotR III: 38).[10] Equally, it was a sign of the decline of learning that Galadriel and Lothlórien were regarded with fear and that, in the words of Faramir, "we esteem a warrior, nonetheless, above men of other crafts (LotR II: 287)."

One other example of the priestly nature of Dúnadan kingship is the ritual of self-coronation. Most monarchs are crowned by priests representing the deity in whose name the monarch reigns. However, as priest-king, a Dúnadan King either received the crown from his father, or else took it from the dead hands of his father in his tomb, and performed the ritual himself emphasising his peculiar status and the fact that he alone had the authority which derived from the Valar (LotR III: 245).

The Sacred Nature of Dúnedain Kings

The sacred nature of Dúnadan kingship can be seen in many areas, most especially in that of healing. The idea of the king as a healer is extremely ancient, probably coming from our shaman past. The King acting as a healer showed his nature as a sacred or semi-sacred person in whom there resided a greater power

than was given to ordinary people. Although there is no record of a Númenórean Monarch acting in this function, the Kings of the Dúnedain certainly did, otherwise Ioreth could never have said, "The hands of the king are the hands of a healer (LotR III: 136)."[11]

This healing seems to have been hereditary via the Elf ancestry of the royal line. Aragorn refers to the fact that the herb athelas had been brought to Middle-earth by the Númenóreans and that the Rangers of the North made use of it (LotR 1:210-211), but there is no indication as to whether their particular healing power came from their descent via Lúthien (being such a small community they probably all had a common ancestry in the Royal Line) or from their race as Númenóreans.

Aragorn-Elessar as priest-king

Aragorn-Elessar saw fit to have re-established all of the priestly and sacred roles of the Dúnedain Kings. In rediscovering the hallow on Mount Mindolluin he would have used it once again as the place for offering the prayers at the three great festivals. He harmonized the whole of society, not only by his wise handling of people and sound judgments, but also by his renewal of ancient rituals such as his coronation which followed the ancient form, even though he surprised many by asking Gandalf to crown him.[12] The crowning was carried out in the name of the Valar and with their blessing, "Now come the days of the King, and may they be blessed while the thrones of the Valar endure (LotR III: 246)!"

After Gandalf had placed the crown on his head Aragorn-Elessar is said to have been "revealed to them now for the first time…tall as the sea-kings of old…[standing] above all that were near him…ancient of days…in the flower of manhood; …wisdom sat upon his brow… strength and healing were in his hands…a light was about him (ibid)." He was no longer Aragorn, the Chieftain of the Dúnedain of Arnor, he was now Elessar, the Elfstone, and Envinyatar, the Renewer (LotR III: 139).

He planted the newly-discovered fruit of the White Tree in the Court of the Fountain himself. This was a priestly act of consecration re-establishing his link with Valinor whence came the ancestry of the Tree. It may indicate, although there is no evidence for this, that the King planted the first seeds in order to ensure a good harvest. Almost definitely he would have offered the first-fruits of that harvest (Sil: 269).

Aragorn-Elessar was already a healer: this power was innate rather than being bestowed at a coronation. He acted out this role on a number of occasions at Weathertop where he found athelas to help Frodo; after the escape from Moria where again he helped Frodo; and in Minas Tirith where his healing of Merry acted out the ancient belief about the King being the healer. By this last action he was recognized as King, even though incognito. Indeed Faramir's first words on waking from the sleep of the Black Breath, with the "light of knowledge and love in his eyes" are to recognize Aragorn as King, "My lord, you called me. I come. What does the king command (LotR III: 142)?" These words have a ritual/liturgical ring to them and could just as easily be applied to a deity as to a king, even given the "feudal" atmosphere of Gondor.

The Calendar and the Liturgical Year

Unfinished Tales refers to three great holy days: Erukyerme (Q. Prayer to Eru) the start of spring; Erulaitalë (Q. Praise of Eru) midsummer, and Eruhantalë (Q. Thanksgiving to Eru) the end of autumn (UT: 166). Each of these was also related to the agricultural calendar: Erukyermë (sowing), when the King made request for a good year, Erulaitalë (growing), when the King led praise; and Eruhantalë (harvest), when the King gave thanks for a good harvest and brought the offering of the first fruits.

This indicates, if nothing else did, that the Númenórean economy was based on arable farming, with a Monarch whose ritual presence and invocation helped ensure a successful year. The year began in spring and corresponded with the Calendar of Imladris.[13] This fact leads to the conclusion that both Calendars were based on Elvish Calendars of the First Age which probably themselves had their origins in the Valinorean ritual cycle. This Númenórean calendar formed the basis of the Dúnadan calendar at the time of the War of the Ring.

There is one apparent contradiction. In Appendix D of *The Lord of the Rings* it is stated that the Númenóreans adhered to the custom of beginning the year in mid-winter, which had been used by Men of the North-west from whom they were derived in the First Age.[14] However, in *Unfinished Tales* it is stated that the King (offered) prayer for the coming year at the Erukyermë in the first days of spring (UT: 166).

Prayers would not be offered for the "coming year" if the year was already two months old. However, the contradiction is only apparent. Many peoples have several "New Year" dates; in our own society we have the calendar year, the financial year, the Christian year, the educational year, etc. All of these have different starting dates. It would seem that the Númenóreans had at least two "years:" the calendar year, of Mannish origin, starting in midwinter, and the liturgical year, of Elvish origin, starting with the coming of spring.

The Númenórean calendar was continued by the Dúnedain of both Arnor and Gondor and was called Kings' Reckoning (KR). Each year was of 365 days and consisted of ten months of 30 days, and two months, Norui and Cerveth, of 31 days. The three extra days, Yestarë, Loënde, and Mettarë, were holy days (holidays). The Dúnedain made very careful calendrical calculations and by the War of the Ring the Revised Calendar of the Steward, Mardil, was in use. This was known as Stewards' Reckoning (SR). Each month had 30 days with five days outside the months. These five holidays included the three mentioned above together with Tuilérë and Yáviérë. The Dúnadan calendar by the War of the Ring can be reconstructed as follows:[15]

month [quenya]	month [sindarin]	translation	holiday	festival
narvinyë	narwain	new-sun	yestarë [first-day]	
nénimë	ninui	wet		
súlimë	gwaeron	windy		
viressë	gwirith	stirring	tuilérë [spring-day]	erukyermë
lótessë	lothron	blossomy		
nárië	nórui	sunny		
cerimë	cerveth	cutting	loëndë [mid-year]	erulaitalë
úrimë	urui	hot		
yavannië	ivanneth	fruit-giving		
narquelië	narbeleth	sun-waning	yáviérë [fruit-day]	eruhantalë
hísimë	hithui	misty		
ringarë	girithon	cold/shivering	mettarë [last-day]	

It will be noticed from the above table that it is possible to relate the three holy days of the Númenóreans to three of the holidays of the Dúnedain. In addition the two extra holidays added by the SR corresponded exactly with the two holy days, Tuilérë and Yáviérë, of the Númenóreans that were not specifically stated in the KR; this must have been quite deliberate and a recognition by the Stewards of a long-established practice, of treating these days as holy days. Even in exile the Kings of Gondor "offered praise and thanks on behalf of [their] people (Letters: 206)," and whilst I do not think that the Stewards continued this ritual undoubtedly the days remained and the incidental evidence leads to the conclusion that all five days were used by the Dúnedain as holy days with the Stewards changing the Calendar to take this into account. The other two days, Yestarë and Mettarë, corresponded to the Calendar of Rivendell and were doubtless used for similar purposes of celebration.

It is also significant that the festival days corresponded with the sun, so that they related to the solstices and equinoxes. For example under both KR and SR Yestarë (first-day) coincided with the winter solstice. This would have been extremely appropriate for a people who still remembered the Noldorin traditions relating to the sun. It seems that the rising sun was greeted with trumpets. This Noldorin ritual may only have occurred at Midsummer's but Fingolfin greeted both the first moon and the first sun with such a ritual (Sil: 100, 106, 190). The people of Gondolin met the rising sun with song, although this was a time of festival (Sil: 242). I think that such rituals may have been daily activities.

For the Númenóreans the sun signaled the beginning of a new day as she rose out of the eastern sea. There is no indication that the Dúnedain changed this practice and it must be presumed to have continued. Therefore the Dúnadan calendar had an arithmetic function but also a ritual function and the holidays were indeed "holy days" with roots deep in Númenórean and Elven history.

The Númenóreans began with a six-day week but added an extra structure, together with the names, they took with them into exile and it was, apparently, the first of their calendrical methods to be adopted by other peoples. The weekly calendar, with its ritual associations, at the time of the War of the Ring, is as follows:

weekday	quenya	sindarin
the stars	elenya	orgilion
the sun	anarya	oranor
the moon	isilya	orithil
the tree	aldëa	orgaladh
the heavens	menelya	ormenel
the sea	eärenya	oaëron
the valar (high day)	valanya	orbelain

As with the Elvish calendars, these names indicate whom and what the Dúnedain reverenced. The name of the fourth day had been changed from Two Trees to One Tree as they referred to the White Tree only which was held in immense respect.

Whilst the names of the Dúnedain months are seasonal and climatic in character the rest of the calendar has strongly ritual implications. The holy days are based on the sun, which is used to indicate the beginning (and ending) of each day. The weekly names are derived from natural objects and powers worthy of veneration. The name given to Osgiliath, "Citadel of the Stars," and the two great cities which flanked it, called Minas Anor, "Tower of the [Setting] Sun," and Minas Ithil, "Tower of the [Rising] Moon" together with Dúnadan devotion to the study of the stars indicates the importance of these celestial bodies in Dúnadan belief. The fact that Faramir mentions the moonset over Gondor when about to obtain Frodo's aid in capturing Gollum demonstrates the importance of such an event (LotR II: 292).

The conclusion about the religion of the Dúnedain from the calendrical evidence must be that they celebrated a ritual year based on the cycle of the sun with holy days at certain significant points in this cycle. Three of these days coincided with the ancient Númenórean festivals related to agriculture. Although there is no direct evidence it would seem that on these holy days there would be feasting and rest from work. The Kings of Gondor visited the hallow at Mount Mindolluin, although this practice was not continued by the Stewards. The last day of the week was also used as a day of rest and as a holy day. The sun and moon had an important part to play in Dúnadan thought and some Dúnedain undoubtedly practised some form of quiet thought or meditation at times of the day when the celestial bothes were most prominent. The principles underlying both KR and SR were incorporated into the calendar established under Aragorn-Elessar.

The Calendar under the Restored Monarchy

The fall of Sauron and the re-establishment of the royal Line of Elendil brought a new calendar which was known as the New Reckoning (NR). It was "a return to the Kings' Reckoning adapted to fit a spring-beginning as in the Eldarin *loa* (LotR III: 390)." The year would start on the day that Sauron fell and would commemorate both that event and the deeds of the Ring-bearers.[16] This meant that the whole calendar moved five days earlier.[17] Yestarë was now used to celebrate not only the new year (a calendrical event) but also the fall of Sauron (an historical event), the Erukyermë (a ritual event), and the spring equinox (an astronomical and ritual event), although these last two were possibly celebrated on Mettarë.

The three-day autumn festival of the Elves was incorporated and, added to it was the last day of Yavannië, 30 Yavannië, which was Frodo's birthday and was celebrated in his honor. This day was called Cormarë (Ring-day). On leap-years this festival was doubled. According to one interpretation of Tolkien's calculations Cormarë coincided with the autumn equinox which gave the festival, like Yestarë, more than one function (see note 17). Unlike KR all the months would have 30 days, which did not allow for all the festival holy days that seemed now to be used.

Compared to SR the major differences were: first, Yestarë and Mettarë were moved to between Súlimë and Viressë; second, Loëndë was moved to its correct arithmetic position between Yavannië and Narquelië; third, the use of the Elvish Enderi meant that there was no place for the two extra days of SR, Tuilérë and Yávíerë, which were respectively absorbed into Yestarë and Loëndë.

This created a 365-day calendar with two holiday periods, 2 days at the turn of the year and 3 days (plus Yavannië 30) in the middle of the year. I think that we have to assume the three great Númenórean festivals would have remained basically unchanged in their seasonal place, even given the five-day move in the calendar, as they corresponded to the ritual surrounding agricultural events rather than to arithmetic calculations. Thus the NR allowed for both the Erukyermë, corresponding to Yestarë (and incorporating Tuilérë), and the Eruhantalë, corresponding to Loëndë (and incorporating Yáviérë); but it did not allow for the Erulaitalë.

Therefore I think that Nárië 30 or Cerimë 1 was used as a holy day for celebrating the Erulaitalë; there is no evidence for which day was used for this purpose, but, on one likely calculation (see note 17), Cerimë 1 coincides with Midsummer, and therefore I think that this was the more likely day to celebrate the Erulaitalë. It may well be that both Nárië 30 and Cerimë 1 were holidays. Although, once again, there is no evidence for this, I think that Narvinyë 1 (or Ringarë 26 or 28) was used to celebrate the winter solstice. A winter holiday is important in all cultures in the northern hemisphere.

The calendar under the restored kingship of Aragorn-Elessar can be reconstructed as follows:

month [quenya]	month [sindarin]	translation	holiday	festival
viressë	girithron	stirring	yestarë [first-day]	erukyermë
lótessë	lothron	blossomy		
nárië	nórui	sunny		
cerimë	cerveth	cutting	cerimë 1	erulaitalë
úrimë	urui	hot		
yavannië	ivanneth	fruit-giving	yvannië 30	cormairë [ring-day]
			enderë 1 [mid-day 1]	
			loëndë [mid-year]	eruhantalë
			enderë 3 [mid-day 3]	
narquelië	narbeleth	sun-waning		
hisimë	hithui	misty		
ringarë	girithon	cold/shivering		
narvinyë	narwain	new-sun	narvinyë 1	
nénimë	ninui	wet		
súlimë	gwaeron	windy		mettarë [last-day]

The NR broke with the dual Númenórean new year and united the liturgical year with the calendrical year, basing it on the Elvish liturgical cycle including the Enderi. This is a clear statement both in terms of belief and ritual, and in terms of politics, of the "Lúthienian" ancestry of the Monarch. It also emphasises the authority of the priest-king to change the liturgical year. In addition it includes innovation, for never before had the Dúnedain included two festivals, Erukyermë and Cormarë, that celebrated (or included in their celebration) historical events.[18]

The ritual practice on the festivals

As is stated earlier it can be assumed that Dúnadan practice followed Númenórean practice wherever possible. I envisage a King of Gondor visiting the hallow behind Mount Mindolluin on each of the three great festivals; unlike the Meneltarma only the King would go (LotR III: 248-250).[19] On these occasions the King, probably dressed in white, would offer the appropriate prayers. These prayers would have been in Quenya, the ritual and sacred language of Númenor, and may well have been identical to those offered by Númenórean Monarchs.[20]

At the Erukyermë, the prayers of the King would be mainly those of supplication and intercession, asking Eru for good weather for the year, for success in the planting of the seeds and for the growing of the crops and the newborn animals. At the Erulaitalë, the prayers were those of praise to Eru for His nature. At the Eruhantalë, the prayers were those of thanksgiving for the harvest.

"The Akallabêth" mentions "the offering of the first fruits to Eru (Sil: 266)." This ritual may have taken place at the Erulaitalë or at the Eruhantalë. Such an offering is more in keeping with a thanksgiving celebration where the worshipper offers gifts as a token of thanks to the deity, but it would not be unknown at an earlier festival. The gifts offered were almost definitely agricultural, both cereal and fruit; there is no hint at all of animal sacrifice in any Númenórean culture. In Middle-earth the Eruhantalë occurred at the end of the month of Yavannië which was associated with fruit-giving and therefore this would have been most appropriate. In addition as these festivals coincided with particular events related to the sun it is probable that hymns in praise of Anar were sung.

It may be that as the seasons were slightly different in Arnor and Gondor there was a difference in the ceremonial at the various holy days but this is unlikely. Festivals that are transported to different climates manage to retain their original customs remarkably well, like Christmas in the Antipodes, and given the very traditional nature of Dúnadan society I have no doubt that the particular climatic conditions did not affect the ritual celebration very much.

After the rituals at the hallow the King would have presided at a ritual feast, where sacred songs would have been sung. Unfortunately we have no record at all of what the content of these hymns might have been. Queen Arwen "sang a song of Valinor (LotR III: 252)" in the Court of the Fountain when Frodo went to say farewell, but that gives us very little indication of the royal rituals.

The development of historically-based festivals means that it can be assumed that the Erukyermë prayers were not only offered by the Monarch for a good year but also in thanks for the overthrow of Sauron, the restoration of the true line of priest-kings and the courage of the Ring-bearers. It is probable that the hymn of praise to Frodo and Sam sung on the Field of Cormallen together with the retelling of the tale of "Frodo of the Nine Fingers and the Ring of Doom" was such a one (LotR III: 231—232). On Cormarë similar rituals would have taken place.

Holy places

There are many references to holy places in the Númenórean scheme of things. The most famous of these is the Meneltarma, Pillar of the Heavens, on the island of Númenor. According to a description in *Unfinished Tales* it was a tall mountain with a plateau-like summit which could only be reached by a specially-made path (UT: 166). This plateau was left completely untouched and there was no building, altar, or any other unnatural object. There were even no birds there, except three eagles who were believed to be the Witnesses of Manwe. No tool or weapon could be taken there and although anyone could go there no one could speak at all, except the Monarch on the three great festivals. The place was renowned for its silence which was said to be so great that even a stranger ignorant of Númenor and all its history, if he were transported thither, would not have dared to speak aloud (ibid). The emphasis on silence is important in Númenórean/Dúnadan ritual as I shall discuss later.

There were other sacred sites in Númenor, most notably the tombs of the Monarchs below the Meneltarma and the court of the Monarchs where the White Tree, Nimloth, grew. This tree symbolized the link between Valinor and Númenor, being descended from Galathilion, the Silver Tree of Tirion, itself made by Yavanna in the likeness of Telperion, Eldest of Trees. It was regarded with such reverence that Isildur was willing to risk his life to rescue the last fruit (Sil: 263).

The Númenórean pattern was adopted in Middle-earth. These were some of the holy places of Gondor a) The hallow on Mount Mindolluin, b) The Court of the Fountain where the White Tree grew, c) Amon Anwar, the "Hill of Awe," called the Halifirien by the Rohirrim, d) The tombs of the Kings of Gondor

and of their Stewards, lying between Minas Tirith and the precipice of Mindolluin.

The hallow on Mindolluin corresponded in some ways to the Meneltarma (see note 19). However, there were some major differences. First, as mentioned earlier, it was a closed rather than an open hallow. The path by which Gandalf led Aragorn was one "that few now dared to tread (LotR III: 249)." This implies that some, the Stewards and their heirs for example, did use the path, possibly to plant the fruit of the White Tree. This path led "to a high hallow where only the kings had been wont to go (ibid)." From it Aragorn seems to have been able to survey his realm.

The sanctity of the Court of the Fountain arose solely because it housed the White Tree, even after it had died. Undoubtedly the courtyard had been built as a replica of the original in Armenelos, and the White Tree was held in great reverence. After the coronation of Aragorn-Elessar and the discovery of the new sapling, "the withered tree was uprooted, but with reverence; and they did not burn it, but laid it to rest in the silence of Rath Dínen (LotR III: 250)."

The Tree was a site of ritual. Songs of Valinor were sung in its presence, while it grew and blossomed, and it was a place where the King and the Queen sat to receive important guests (LotR III: 252). People would have paid honour to it as they passed. It had been remembered in ancient rhyme (LotR II: 202), and came directly after the reference to the King in the song of the Eagle, where the idea is that the renewal of the Tree shall bless the City and by implication signal the renewal of much else (LotR III: 241). The hallow of the Tree was a central place in Dúnadan thought and ritual.

The sanctity of Amon Anwar arose from it being the site of the tomb of Elendil. As Cirion stated when taking the Oath with Eorl, "this is his tomb, and from it comes the awe that dwells on this hill and in the woods below (UT: 304)." Isildur has placed a casket containing his father's remains under a mound on Amon Anwar, stating "This is a tomb and memorial of Elendil the Faithful. Here it shall stand at the mid-point of the Kingdom of the South in the keeping of the Valar, while the Kingdom endures; and this place shall be a hallow that none shall profane. Let no man disturb its silence and peace, unless he be an heir of Elendil (ibid)." It was intended as a place where the King could go, especially when he felt the need of wisdom in days of danger or distress. The hill retained its reverence even after Cirion had removed the casket to the Hallow of Minas Tirith.

The burial places of the Kings in Minas Tirith were referred to as the Hallows which reflected their status in Númenor and were treated with great reverence (LotR III: 247).[21]

Only a few could go there: the Kings, Stewards and those who looked after the tombs (LotR III: 99-100). It was forbidden to do acts of violence there, the penalty for which was death (LotR III: 247).[22]

There are a number of significant features about these hallows. First, with the exception of the White Tree, they were only accessible to the King or his representatives. Second, there was usually only one path to the site. This path might be kept locked, as with the route to the tombs, or might be overgrown and unseen to the casual observer, as with Amon Anwar. Third, weapons were forbidden, except as part of the ritual, as in the Oath of Eorl (UT: 304). Fourth, there was an atmosphere of silence. This silence seems to have been an important part of Númenórean and Dúnadan ritual.

Funeral Ritual

In studying most ancient cultures the difficulty relating to funerary rituals is that most evidence refers only to those of a high status whose tombs, mummified bothes, etc., survived whereas those of the common people did not. There follows the danger of assuming that all funerals follow the "royal" pattern and this is not necessarily the case. There is very little evidence of Dúnadan funerals other than for those of high status.

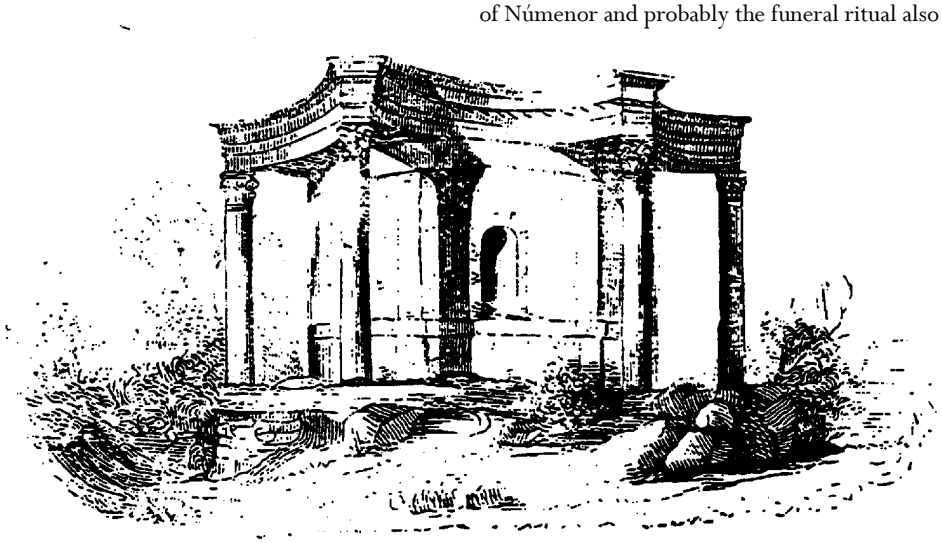
Boromir's body was carefully dressed and then placed on a funeral boat with his weapons on him and those of his enemies at his feet After the boat had disappeared over the falls of Rauros both Aragorn and Legolas sang a funeral dirge. These dirges referred mainly to the loss of Boromir, only Aragorn's second dirge referring to his qualities as a person. Faramir, thought by his father to be dead, was carried on a funeral bed to his would-be pyre. Aragorn-Elessar lay down on a funeral "bed that had been prepared for him (LotR III: 343)."

According to the song of a maker of Rohan after the Battle of the Pelennor Fields both Dúnedain of Gondor and the Rohirrim were buried under mounds, probably on the battlefield itself (LotR III: 124-125). Elendil's remains were placed in a casket under a mound (see above), but this may be a unique action for a unique person.

The places where the dead were buried were regarded with great reverence as indicated by their status as holy places, referred to above. In Minas Tirith the dead must have been embalmed for they were laid on marble funeral beds/tables, as if asleep, with their "hands folded, head[s] pillowed upon stone (LotR III: 100)." These beds were placed in the Houses of the Dead which were under Mount Mindolluin and which were looked after by special custodians.

It would seem from the phrase, "between pale domes and empty halls and images of men long dead (ibid)," that each family had its own House where its dead were placed. The dead had their images placed outside these Houses. The dead person was carefully prepared but it was not common for their possessions to be placed with them. The sleeping position undoubtedly reflected the Dúnadan belief about life after death: that they were due to wake and that death was not the end of existence. Apart from burial after battle (when burial in earth mounds was the common practice) there is no evidence for methods of burial other than that provided at Minas Tirith.

The funeral ritual included silence, mourners with bowed heads, and dirges which referred to the grief at the death, and to the qualities of the dead. There is no reference to any other ritual, although a funeral oration was likely. There is no mention at all of committal or prayers. The Rohirrim had a feast after the burial of Théoden and that feature may have been copied from Dúnadan ritual, but there is no evidence either way (LotR III: 255). The placing of the dead under the holy mountain reflected the practice of Númenor and probably the funeral ritual also



followed that of Númenor. Funeral rituals tend to follow very ancient forms.

Individual and Communal Devotion: Invocations and the Standing Silence

When faced by the threat of a wayward Mûmak whilst guarding Frodo and Sam, Damrod cries to his companion, Mablung, "Ware! Ware! May the Valar turn him aside! Mûmak! Mûmak (LotR II: 269)!" As far as I know this is the only reference to the Valar by any Dúnadan other than a King. Unlike Elves who usually invoked Elbereth no specific Vala is mentioned but its use here indicates the perceived power of the Valar to act even after more than three thousand years of exile from Númenor. However, it is an Eagle (with a capital "E") who brings the message of victory to the people of Minas Tirith, and these were known to be the messengers of Manwë.

The only specific reference to individual ritual in *The Lord of the Rings* is when Faramir and his companions give what can be called a "silent grace or blessing" before eating: "Faramir and all his men turned and faced west in a moment of silence (LotR II: 284)."[23] Their guests, Frodo and Sam had to do the same. After they had sat down Faramir explains it by saying that they "look towards Númenor, that was, and beyond to Elvenhome that is, and to that which is beyond Elvenhome and will ever be (ibid)." He is interested to learn that the Hobbits have no such "custom" as he calls it, although the Hobbits do have the Dúnadan habit of bowing to the host (before eating) and rising to thank the host afterwards.

The words of explanation that Faramir uses with their triple use of the verb "to be" in the three main tenses: "Númenor that was," "Elvenhome that is," and "beyond Elvenhome… will ever be" have an extremely strong liturgical ring to them and they sound like a prayer or hymn. It may have been such and Faramir may have been quoting what was to him very familiar.

The liturgical sense of this "grace" is heightened by the physical action of standing and facing the west. Everyone was involved in this ritual, the Hobbits with Faramir and the whole company at the feast on the Field of Cormallen, the other reference to "the Standing Silence" as it was called (LotR III: 233).[24] This universal participation not only indicates the importance of the ritual but also possibly the idea that the Dúnadan ritual, being Dunadan, was inevitably correct as they had been taught by the Eldar who had been taught by the Valar. Possibly the most important aspect of the "grace" is that it was silent.

Individual and Communal Devotion: The Role of Silence

Throughout this article I have referred to silence. Not only at tombs and at funerals, places and occasions where most are quiet or silent, but also at the holiest of places, on the Meneltarma, at Amon Anwar; and on common occasions, like the "grace" before meals. There are many other references which imply silence, in that activity is carried on alone. Faramir, in his criticism of earlier generations of Dúnedain, comments that "Childless lords sat in aged halls musing on heraldry; in secret chambers withered men compounded strong elixirs, or in high cold towers asked questions of the stars (LotR II: 286)." All of these were activities carried out in silence.

It seems that, rather than use words which might come between the speaker and the listener, the Númenóreans and the Dúnedain used silent prayer and meditation. This may be the reason for the lack of Dúnedain hymns or prayers, unlike the Elves in this respect.

Conclusion

The Dúnedain of Gondor followed their ancestors of Númenor in most things including belief and its associated ritual. They were led by divinely-appointed sacred priest-monarchs without whom worship of the True God was impossible. This sacred line was restored in the person of Aragorn-Elessar who re-established the correct forms of worship and the harmony of his people. The three great festivals of Númenor had their counterparts in Gondor (and I assume in Arnor) even though the site of the priest-king's prayers was at a closed hallow rather than the open one on the Meneltarma.

The tombs of the Dúnedain and their devotion to the White Tree were also modelled on the practice in Númenor. The most unusual features of Dúnadan worship were: first, the uniqueness of the priesthood; only the King was a priest and he seems to have had no representatives, save that a Ruling Steward could, under exceptional circumstances, exercise a delegated authority. Second, the liturgical and personal use of silence, which seems to have been the main Dúnadan method of prayer, both in community and individually.

The Dúnedain retained their devotion to the unnamed God, Eru Ilúvatar, throughout all their vicissitudes, and revered the Valar. Although on the surface it seems that they had very little "religion," in fact they had retained much of their ancestral faith and were able to practise it again with the return of the King. It was this faith, and its associated ritual, which enabled them to survive a thousand years without a King and the seemingly unending struggle against evil. They could agree with the words of the Eagle bringing the tidings from the Lords of the West: "Sing and rejoice, ye people of the Tower of Guard, for your watch hath not been in vain (LotR III: 241)."

1. These records and comments on the religion of Númenor are found mainly in 'A Description of the Island of Númenor' (UT: 165-172) and in Letters: 204-207. In addition the 'Akallabêth' found in *The Silmarillion* also contains useful information.
2. Throughout this article I shall refer to Aragorn as Aragorn before his coronation and as Aragorn-Elessar afterwards.
3. Throughout *The Lord of the Rings, The Silmarillion,* and *Unfinished Tales* the titles King, Queen and Steward are almost always capitalised even when referring to non-Númenórean Kings. For the sake of consistency I have followed this pattern. I have used the word "Monarch" for Númenor, as both men and women could ascend the throne, but "King" for Gondor as it was restricted to men.
4. The correspondence of Gil-galad with Númenórean Monarchs such as Meneldur implies equality (UT: 199-200).
5. The debate between Arnor and Gondor on this matter is found in LotR III: Appendix A. Although it was unresolved in principle, in practice only men became Dúnedain Monarchs and only male descent was accepted. Aragorn could claim the throne of Gondor through Elendil.
6. Tolkien thinks that the Númenóreans of Gondor "are best pictured in (say) Egyptian terms (Letters: 211)." However, in the same letter he refers to Númenórean theology as "Hebraic;" this does not involve a contradiction. The kings of both Israel and Judah had special roles at the three great pilgrim festivals: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot, which were also agricultural festivals. With their pure monotheism, their reluctance to utter the Divine Name, their one sacred place, their one sacred family, their three great festivals, etc., the Númenórean kingdom and its successor states are most analogous to the Davidic monarchy of Judah.
7. Cf. UT: 218 for all the details in this paragraph.
8. Cf. UT index: Q. nólë = long study, lore, knowledge; parma = book, maitë = handed.
9. Its use by Cirion is interesting for it shows that in this instance at least the rightful regent of the King could, in certain instances, act in a royal role in his absence. The other example of this delegated authority was the accepted right of Denethor, although his wisdom might be questioned, in using the Palantir (UT: 401—415; esp. n.16). Saruman also used one but his mind was captured whereas Denethor, although of lesser status than Saruman, succumbed far less than Saruman because he had the right as representing the King. When the Kings of Arnor and Gondor were reigning they gave such powers to the various keepers of the Stones at places such as Isengard (ibid).
10. Most Dúnedain seem to have had a sound grasp of the history of their role in combating Sauron.
11. British monarchs as late as Queen Anne "touched" for scrofula, and Charles X of France did so in the 1820's.
12. He re-established the ancient succession/coronation ritual when he passed the crown onto his son, Eldarion, as he prepared to the (LotR III: 343).
13. Cf. p.40 in Hickman "The Religious Rituals and Practise of the Elves of Middle-earth at the Time of the War of the Ring" *Mallorn 26:* 39-43 for a discussion of the Calendar of Imladris. [Note: This article will be reprinted in *Other Hands* 9.]
14. The material in this appendix supplies much of the information for this and the following section in which I have only given references for material not found in Appendix D.
15. I have included both the Quenya and the Sindarin names for the months. Only the Dúnedain used the Sindarin form. I have used both Jim Allan *(An Introduction to Elvish'* Hayes, Middx., Bran's Head: 1978) and Robert Foster *(The Complete Guide to Middle-Earth'* London, Alien & Unwin: 1978) as sources for the translations of the names of the months.
16. It surely can be no coincidence that March 25 is the Christian festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and, until 1152, used to be the New Year's Day in Britain.
17. The calculations for solstices and equinoxes based on the information in Appendix D present some problems. The correlation between the Shire Reckoning, the Kings' Reckoning, the Stewards' Reckoning, the New Reckoning and our contemporary calendar is not always clear. According to Appendix D, Sauron fell on March 25 in the Shire Reckoning (also in the SR and the KR), and Tolkien calculates this to correspond to March 27 in our calendar. If Yestarë is the actual New Year Day (i.e., March 25), then Viressë 1 corresponds to March 26 or March 28 in our calendar. On this basis the festival dates given by Tolkien do not relate to the equinoxes and solstices (E.g., He dates Cormarë to September 22 in the Shire Reckoning, old style, but this only occurs in a leap-year such as 1420 Shire Reckoning, whereas if March 25 in the Shire Reckoning was March 25 in our calendar there would be a far greater correlation.). I have assumed that the dates of the festivals were based around the sun and have written accordingly, but the situation is not satisfactory.
18. With the possible exception of Shinto, all major contemporary religions include in their ritual calendar festivals which celebrate an historical event.
19. In a footnote in Letters: 193-194, it is pointed out that there was no substitute to the Hallow on the Meneltarma. I think, however, that the Kings of Gondor used the hallow on Mount Mindolluin as such.
20. The wording would have been recorded: Tar-Palantir performed the correct rituals at the Meneltarma (Sil: 269; UT: 223) and Amandil, the father of Elendil, was alive at that time, and probably was present. It may be that Elendil himself was present when a young man.
21. "the building of splendid tombs — their only 'hallows'; or almost so (Letters: 206)."
22. Beregond's penalty for killing in the Hallows was remitted on account of his valour in battle and for his intention in attempting to save Faramir.
23. In a footnote Tolkien refers to this as a "glimpse" of religion as "divine worship" practised by the Dúnedain (Letters: 194).
24. Note the capitalisation.

THE LOST REALM OF MYR

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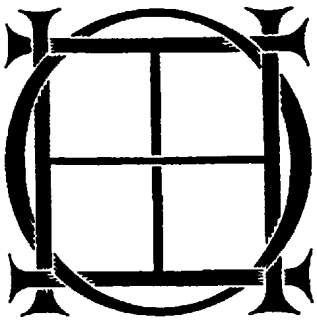
When I concluded a long and successful campaign in which my players took part on the downfall of Arthedain, I was dismayed despite my enjoyment of the games I had rum. The players had performed admirably, but we had all known, despite the fact that I had not set history in stone, that the odds were against them. And that history re-written would seem strange.

When the campaign had been concluded for a few months and we were all getting the urge to play once more, I decided to go out on a limb and give them the chance to explore a part of Middle-earth unknown to anyone. Hence the realm of Myr. It was my first attempt at building a new society within a world already in place. This article contains the frameworks I used when my players visited Myr and includes some ideas for how you might use Myr in your own campaign.



HISTORY

The realm of Myr, located in north central Middle-earth, was founded by an Elven woman named Myronimair many years ago. Her kindred were Avari Elves who woke in the far east at the beginning of the First Age who never journeyed to see the light of the Trees nor gained the wisdom of the other Eldar. The particular group that became the Myric Elves were actually traveling westward when beset by a blizzard like none ever seen before. Myronimair saved them and the survivors founded Myr in the large taiga valley in the far north.

Myronimair at first dealt fairly with her people, but she was passionately xenophobic, and for a long time the realm was hidden away from the outside world by her powers. But with the arrival of a band of Númenóreans in the Second Age, things began to change subtly. Angered that Oromë still lived (see below), she became more and more twisted. She ceased to call herself Myronimair and demanded to be called just Myr or the Empress Myr. Either wanting her favor or too fearful to protest, the people of the realm did as they were told. Needless to say, her formerly benevolent rule became far more despotic.

Around T.A. 1300, emissaries of the Witch-king stole into Myr and bargained for her aid of magic and training of certain of their number. This she granted, in hopes they would eventually give her the ability to seek out and destroy Oromë. The Witch-king, bidden by his master, increased Myr's knowledge of the black arts. Times became more evil for Myr and her realm. For now, the forces of the Necromancer and the Witch-king have let her be, but they have not forgotten about the Empress of Myr.

RELIGION

Religion is a very personal and private thing for the Myric Elves that usually does not have an impact on everyday life. There are stories and legends of how their people were lost and wandering, seeking a realm to the far west that was nigh unapproachable. A blinding storm struck them, and all would have perished if their leader Myr had not found the haven that eventually became a realm that took her name.

The Myric Elves revere Myronimair as a mythic figure, almost a female Gilgamesh-type hero, who led her people from certain death to found the realm they live in today. They know that Myr is the same woman who led them from the east long ago, but they have a great deal of trouble reconciling the dark woman she is today with the great leader she was thousands of years ago. So they tend to speak of Myronimair more in the past, and make no connections to her also being the Myr of the present.

The great mythical enemy is Oromë, the Vala who attempted to lead all the Elves from the far east to Valinor in the west. He is also called the Lord Betrayer because he did not aid the Elves in their need (when the Myric Elves were separated, he could not find them). The religion involves simple ceremonies recalling the exodus of the Elves, and later many tales are invented about how Myr and Oromë fought for the right to rule the Elves in exile (purely myth).

The Myric Elves do not know of Varda or Eru or any of the other Valar, but they do revere a "spirit" they call Yevane (Yavanna), who is seen as the embodiment of the land of Myr. Ceremonies to her involve the burning of scented leaves from the woods and meditation.

MINDSET

The Elves of Myr are extremely different from (and perhaps seem even bizarre to) the other Free Peoples who are used to the traditions of the West. These Elves know nothing of Eru and his works save the following:

1. They came from a lakeside valley called Cuiviénen in the far east, where there were many of their kind.
2. A person called Oromë came to them from the west and said he was to lead them to Paradise, where those who had made them now dwelt. He spoke of many deities there.
3. They set out for Paradise but were lost in a great storm. Oromë did not come to save them, but their leader Myronimair led them to safety. She told them it must be a land made by Yevane (Yavanna) for them to dwell (Oromë did not teach the Elves of the creation cycle in Cuiviénen, though he did mention Yavanna). They mourned their separation from their brethren and the loss of paradise, but decided to make the best of their lot

The Myric Elves are different most notably in the following respects:

1. They do not have the "light of the Eldar" about them, though they otherwise appear as graceful and lovely as the other Elves in Endor. The Empress herself is stately, beautiful, and very tall. She has dark hair, dark eyes, and fair skin.
2. Their memories, though not as ephemeral as those of humans, do fade. This is partially why they often overlook the fact that Myronimair and Myr are the same person.
3. They use Númenórean technology (see below), and are great craftsmen (in the manner of Celebrimbor).
4. They generally lack the wisdom of the Eldar, though they are an intelligent and highly inquisitive people.

Technology

The Myric Elves are superb craftsmen, among other things excelling in smithing, textile arts, and agriculture. They have made the following notable technological advances:

1. Simple machines with working parts: clocks, mills, potters' and sharpening wheels.
2. Advanced glasswork and lenses.
3. VERY rudimentary gunpowder, used more at this point as a curiosity than anything else.
4. Very advanced medicine.
5. Excellent techniques of sailing and farming: lateen sails, astrolabes, compasses, sextants, multi-field systems, irrigation, horse and reindeer-drawn implements. The growing season is very short.
6. Advanced architecture, with flying buttresses, curved archways, towers, domes and spires.

Among the great library at the palace is a collection of technical drawings from Númenor (mostly nautical works) whose worth to the Dúnedain is unimaginable. Many of the works inspired by the Númenóreans have the number five included in the workmanship (e.g., five pointed designs).

Physical and Political Geography

Myr is very similar to the Scandinavian countries in climate and form. The forests are of thick evergreens, and the ground remains frozen much of the year, with a growing season lasting from June to August. The farmers have learned to take great advantage of this by having intensive, hardy crops.

Lake Myr in the southwest is very deep and cold, though there is some good fishing there. The northern sea provides fish and kelp most of the year, and those who live on its shores are generally prosperous. One river, the Cuivene, runs south from the northern sea to Lake Myr.

The entire population of the realm is only about twenty-five hundred, scattered throughout the realm across seventeen compact villages and four larger cities—Inzilad, Tanamir, Rerir, and Gorthal. Major roads connect the cities, with smaller trails linking the villages.

The cities are beautifully laid out and generally very clean. All structures are basically wood, with stone serving as accents and foundations. Common occupations are craftsman, farmer, woodsman, merchant, healer, and fisherman. Each city and village has an elder appointed by Myr, and they are all answerable to her. Although the Empress Myr maintains a personal guard and each settlement possesses a militia (comprised mostly of bowmen), there is no standing army in the realm, save for the hundred odd men Umarth is training in secret at a hidden base at Lake Myr.

The Empress Myr lives with her consort Umarth in Inzilad in the southeast, though Umarth actually has his main stronghold in Tanamir beside the Lake of Myr in the southwest. Dorlas and Ulgarin (see below) dwell mainly at Inzilad, visiting Anguirel at the village of Meres in the north on occasion.

Language and the Arts

The Myr use a very old form of Quenya (2 level penalty for speakers) but most of them also speak and write Adûnaic as well. The influence of Númenor is very notable in many everyday things, such as clothing, buildings, etc. In the palace are many fascinating works of art depicting the realm's past (which players may find both interesting and useful).

Important Individuals

Umarth

The second consort of the Empress. He defeated Tuirel in a challenge of combat in T.A. 1420. At first, he was completely loyal to the Empress, but as the years have gone by, he has himself become ambitious and desirous of ruling the realm. Around 1800, he entreated with the Witch-king himself for certain magical training, and right at her back door the Empress suddenly discovered a competitor for her throne. An uneasy truce exists between the two at this time. Umarth is unnaturally handsome, with long, dark gold tresses and blue eyes, and fair skin. He is tall and well-muscled for an Elf.

Lasarla

The half-sister of the Empress. Politically, she was a moderate and unfortunately for her, a rallying point for those in the realm who desired change. The Empress never dismissed her as a threat, but as she held the secret of Lasarla's affair with an Arnorian named Memkos in trust (as well as the life of Ulgarin, their child), Lasarla never opposed the Empress openly. Only after Memkos was long dead and Ulgarin approaching adulthood (and certainly more influenced by the Empress than her mother) did the Empress have Lasarla put to death for treason to the realm (for daring to love Tuirel, whom the Empress had chosen to be her consort). Lasarla was fair-haired, unlike her sister, with brown eyes and light colored skin.

Memkos Myanar (b. T.A. 250)

Born to a minor noble family, he was a contemporary of King Valandil of Arnor. Memkos was trained as a ranger and was the second-in-command of a small reconnaissance force sent north to Angmar. His unit was captured and many of the men, including the knight commander, were killed in T.A. 294. The rest were sent north and east to be sold into slavery among the Easterlings. Memkos and a few of the others managed to overpower their captors in a snowstorm near Myr, but he alone managed to survive and arrive in the realm, albeit barely alive and half-frozen.

The Empress was informed of his arrival, and she dispatched Lasarla to "befriend" (read interrogate) him, suspecting that he was no ordinary prisoner. Lasarla proceeded with her duty to the best of her ability, but she did not count on failing in love with Memkos. They managed to conceal most of his background from the Empress, claiming that he had suffered a dire memory loss during his travail. The Empress was always suspicious, but as Memkos was never particularly ambitious, she could find no obvious fault with him or no means to be rid of him.

The Myric Elves, so long exiled from other cultures, were for the most part fascinated by Memkos, and he became a popular scholar. He died in T.A. 362 at the relatively young age of 92 (Lasarla suspected either the Empress's hand or injuries he never quite recovered from in his youth). Memkos was tall, with green eyes and black hair.

Ulgarin (b. TA. 351)

Ulgarin has few memories of her father, but while she was still rather young, the girl was forced to watch her mother's execution at the hands of the Empress. This act confused her terribly; while she had learned so much from the Empress and certainly reveled in her dark tutelage, she still held affection for Lasarla and her tutor Dorlas, who was dedicated to Lasarla. This was the point when Ulgarin began to have small doubts. For the next hundred years, though, she continued to work for the Empress, and eventually the Witch-king of Angmar.

In her twisted thoughts, she held the humans to blame for her mother's death, for was it not the fact that her father was human and an outsider that incited Lasarla to have rebellious thoughts in the first place? And she had really not known her father that well—wasn't it entirely possible that he forced Lasarla to have an affair with him? And that he raped her? These were thoughts the Empress encouraged, for the gold from the Witch-king paid for Ulgarin's services as well as the exchange of knowledge and mercenaries pleased her. To Ulgarin, Lasarla is merely a sad remembrance by this time, and as she died a traitor's death, no one dares to speak of her memory.

Dorlas

Dorlas awoke at Cuiviénen and has been a close companion of both the Empress and Lasarla. It broke his heart when he saw the change in Myronimair, and though he is still loyal to what she was, he now pins his hope on Anguirel to set things to rights. He is unsure about Ulgarin, though sympathetic to her cause (having cared for her in her childhood). He and Umarth are sworn enemies, though subtle ones. The Empress does not listen to Umarth's claims that Dorlas is a traitor. Dorlas appears more elderly than some of the other Elves, with silver white hair and blue eyes. He is slender and fair of skin.

Anguirel

Anguirel was raised as a simple fisherman's son, and it was not until 1650 that he knew of his true heritage. He pities Myronimair, but is determined to unseat her and defeat Umarth as well. He does not know what to do about Ulgarin, for he loves her as his sister but does not trust her as an ally. Like his father Tuirel, Anguirel has light brown hair and blue eyes. Tanned and well-muscled from his years of work, he is an imposing and charismatic figure.

Timeline

Second Age

1820 Emissaries from Númenor make a brief visit to Myr. Myronimair receives them warmly at first, but she is shocked by their vanity and air of superiority. They part on peaceful terms, but Myronimair is fearful of their return. She uses a great deal of her own personal power to erect a barrier around her realm.

2900 Myronimair is beginning to show the strain of maintaining the barrier. She calls for her people to give of their own power to her so that the barrier might be maintained. They do so willingly, but the barrier weakens nonetheless; its maintenance is simply beyond her skill.

3262 Sauron taken to Númenor.

3291 Shortly before the fall of Númenor, another group of emissaries travels to Myr, proving the ineffectiveness of the barrier. Influenced by Sauron (who is very curious about this northern Elven realm), they warn Myronimair of the Elves in the west, who not only revere Oromë, but others of his ilk as well. They bring many gifts to her, including some of the technological wonders of Númenor. Though Myronimair does not care for the humans, the thought that Oromë still lives sends her into a blind rage. She demands that armies be readied for the march westward, which delights the Númenóreans influenced by Sauron, since they are anxious to sow seeds of dissent among the Eldar.

3292 The army sets out, traveling through the Iron Hills and west towards Mirkwood. Before they can meet any other Elves, they are destroyed by Easterling tribesmen. In her rage, Myronimair kills the Númenóreans, much to the shock and dismay of her subjects. She disassembles the barrier, but keeps all of the energies for the spell donated by her people for herself.

3319 Númenor falls; Sauron returns to Mordor.

3320 Myronimair demands to be called the Empress Myr. Her only goal becomes learning the dark arts in order to destroy Oromë and his followers. Sauron keeps tabs on her throughout this time.

3441 Sauron is overthrown by the Last Alliance of Elves and Men; he and his followers fall into shadow.

Third Age

295 Memkos Myanar, knight of Valandil of Arnor, crosses the barrier into Myr. He is given to Lasarla for interrogation.

351 Ulgarin, daughter of Memkos and Lasarla, born (cf. *Empire of the Witch-king).* She is first cared for by Dorlas, who was also one of the first to awaken at Cuiviénen.

362 Memkos dies young. The Empress Myr seizes upon Lasarla's time of grief to begin tutelage of Ulgarin. Her heart becomes bitter towards her mother, despite the influence of Dorlas.

436 Lasarla and Tuirel begin a relationship (further alienating Ulgarin). In secret, Lasarla bears him a son, Anguirel. She hides him away with a fisher family in the north of the realm, intending him to be the downfall of her sister (and his own, if necessary). They use Dorlas as a confessor and he keeps their secret safe, mourning the turning of Ulgarin to the Empress's will.

780 Tuirel becomes consort of the Empress Myr against his will, though he hides it well. He and Lasarla continue to meet in secret.

934 Lasarla killed for treason; the real reason is that the Empress suspects (but has not proven) her involvement with Tuirel.

1100 Sauron begins work from Dol Guldur. He sends spies to see what is happening in Myr.

1300 Witch-king seizes Angmar. At Sauron's behest, he sends emissaries to Myr. The Empress increases her knowledge of the dark arts greatly, and agrees to give them her niece Ulgarin to be a go-between. She despises the Witch-king but is glad to learn of newfound abilities. She trains to eventually serve as an agent in Arthedain.

1420 Umarth fights Tuirel in combat for the hand of the Empress. Tuirel is slain; Umarth becomes consort He is subtle and clever and wields more power over the Empress than she realizes, and this increases gradually over the years.

1590 The barrier around Myr falls altogether.

1650 In secret, Dorlas visits Anguirel and tells him of his birthright At first he refuses to believe it; but gradually he begins gathering allies about him, all the while still maintaining his identity as a sailor and fisherman. He waits for an opportunity.

1800 Umarth approaches the Witch-king in order to acquire magical training. The Empress tries in vain to check his power. The realm more or less splits into two camps, with Dorlas and Anguirel leading an unknown third faction. Peace remains but plots increase.

1926 Ulgarin sent to Arthedain to be pupil of Malbeth. She proves to be an excellent spy.

1974 Fall of Arthedain in the winter. Journey of exiles to Imladris. Ulgarin stricken mute as punishment for her attempt to communicate with Thalion.

Adventure Ideas

1. Elrond learns of the realm of Myr and sends a group of player-characters there to investigate. This could be a simple scouting mission or it may allow the players to become involved in the intrigues of the realm.
2. Dorlas decides that it is time for Anguirel to stage a coup and claim the throne for himself. He could use the PCs to contact Anguirel or somehow serve as a decoy to keep Empress Myr occupied while he and Anguirel lay their plans.
3. Any players involved in the downfall of Arthedain might recognize Ulgarin as an Angmar spy and seek to follow her back to Myr to

NPC Profiles (*Fantasy Hero* Stats)

The Empress Myr

Characteristics (total: 209)

15	STR	5	12-	OCV-8
23	DEX	39	14-	DCV - 8
15	CON	10	12-	ECV-10
15	BOD	10		
25	INT	15	14-	
30	EGO	40	15-	
30	PRE	20	15-,6D6base	
20	COM	5		
8	PD	5		
8	ED	5		
4	SPD	7		
8	REC	4		
60	END	15		
60	STN	29		

Powers, perks, and levels (total: 66)

12 +4 magic roll
30 +3 overall levels
24 +3 all combat

Skills (total: 92)

5 Myr (city/area knowledge), 17
4 Adûnaic
4 Quenya
3 ride reindeer, 13-
3 high society, Myr, 15-
5 ks: history of Númenor, 11
3 dancing, 14-
8 +4 run (total: 10")
3 oratory, 14-
4 swimming (total: 4")
3 breakfall, 14-
5 stealth, 15-
2 wf: common melee
2 wf: common missile
4 ks: sailing, 14-
3 interrogation, 15-
5 persuasion, 16-
5 seduction, 16-
5 uv vision
3 lightsleep
5 survival, 12-
5 lip reading, 12-
9 magic skill roll, 17-

Magic (100 active points; variable power pool)

1. Takes ½ phase to change power (skill roll required; no DCV penalty).
2. Restricted to mental magic (clairsentience, ego attack, mental awareness, images, mental defense, mental illusions, mind control, mind link, mind scan, telekinesis, telepathy).

Disadvantages (total: 467)

20 watched by Ulgarin, Dorlas, and Umarth, 11-
10 vain and arrogant
12 +4 magic roll
30 +3 overall levels
24 +3 all combat
15 recognized, 14-
10 regrets loss of former life
10 twisted and evil
292 xp
10 dist ftr. Avari Elf
100 gratis

Possessions

1. protective robes (+ 10/+ 10 protection on all body locations)
2. ring (5D6 end aid; 2D6 stun aid)
3. necklace (10D6 cone AE fire blast 3x per day)
4. crown (+5 PD/ED protection to head; grants wearer extrasensory hearing)

Umarth

Characteristics (total: 149)

15	STR	5	12-	OCV-8
23	DEX	39	14-	DCV-8
15	CON	10	12-	ECV-7
15	BOD	10		
20	INT	10	13-	
20	EGO	20	13-	
25	PRE	15	14-, 5D6BASE	
20	COM	5		
8	PD	5		
8	ED	5		
4	SPD	7		
8	REC	4		
40	END	5		
40	STN	9		

Powers, perks, and levels (total: 54)

24 + 3 all combat
30 +3 overall levels

Combat maneuvers (total: 34)

5 all out (+1 OCV -2 DCV, +2 killing DC)
4 charge (-2 DCV, +1 killing DC + V/5)
5 defend (+ 2 OCV, + 2 DCV block, abort)
4 martial dodge (+5 DCV)
16 +4 DC

Skills (total: 90)

5 Myr (city/area knowledge), 16-
4 Adûnaic
4 Quenya
3 ride reindeer, 13-
3 high society, Myr, 14-
5 ks: history of Númenor, 11-
5 climbing, 15-
3 concealment, 13-
3 contortion, 14-
3 dancing, 14-
8 +4 run (total: 10")
3 oratory, 14-
4 swimming (total: 4")
3 breakfall, 14-
5 stealth, 15-
2 wf: common melee
2 wf: common missile
4 ks: sailing, 13-
3 interrogation, 14-
5 persuasion, 15-
5 seduction, 15-
5 uv vision
3 lightsleep

Disadvantages (total: 327)

10 watched by Empress, 8-
10 vain and arrogant
15 recognized, 14-
10 rivalry with Dorlas
10 can be swayed by flattery and bribery
100 gratis
162 xp
10 dist. ftr. Avari Elf

Possessions

1. two-handed mace (2D6 damage)
2. leather armor inlaid with silver (covers 6-9, 10-18 at+7)
3. Arnorian helm once belonging to Memkos (covers 4-5 at +9)
4. Tourmaline consort's ring (2D6 heal aid; 2D6 STR aid 2x per day)

The Knife of Betrayal

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This short scenario is a murder mystery set in T.A. 1450 in the small Arthadan town of Rood, which lies on the road between Fornost and Annúminas. The player-characters may be either residents of the town or merely passers-by (perhaps stopping there on the way to explore the nearby ruins of Annúminas).

The action is precipitated by a bar-fight in which the characters make an acquaintance of another visitor in town who seeks to recruit able-bodied mercenaries for war in a distant land. But before the characters are given pause to consider the offer, their newfound comrade is arrested by the local sheriff and falsely accused of a murder that has just been committed in town. Characters who choose to investigate the killing have an opportunity of clearing the name of the innocent and endearing themselves to a potential future employer

The Plot

The town of Rood is home to Lord Dunhil and Lady Tiraloth of House Eketta, the second most powerful of the seven chief noble houses of Arthedain. At their sumptuous residence Dunhil and Tiraloth hold frequent parties and balls—celebrating nothing, but disguising the fact that they are not on good terms. Tiraloth is actually in love with Ciramond, the Captain of the Guard. The two have secret meetings and muse of a time when they might sow the seeds of forbidden love.

The unscrupulous and thoroughly depraved Ciramond restlessly awaits an opportunity to do away with his master. He finds just such an opportunity when one of his soldiers inadvertently obtains a dagger belonging to a rowdy stranger passing through town. Anticipating the blame to fall upon the owner of the blade, Ciramond murders Lord Dunhil with the dagger.

With his lord dead and the scapegoat on his way to the gallows, Ciramond believes that he and Tiraloth will at last be able to realize their desire for one another. But things are not so secure as they might appear to Ciramond, for the youth accused of Lord Dunhil's murder may yet be proven innocent. The murder weapon might be traced to him—it did not leave its owner's hand wholly unnoticed. And Tirabeth, Lord Dunhil's young daughter, though she is not sure what happens, knows that there is something wrong with the relationship of her mother and Ciramond.

A Chance Meeting

While the characters are staying at one of Rood's taverns—if they are *real* adventurers, they *will* hang out in a tavern—they encounter a loud, abusive ruffian named Maglar, who is so huge that no one ever opposes him. This Maglar will start a fight with one or all of the characters (being confident that he can take them on). The town Guard is unavailable at the time or is unable to get there before the bout is all over (Nevertheless, it *will* be important that they do stop in before the end of the evening.).

While Maglar is mopping up the floor with the character(s), there will be an intervention in the form of a silvery knife that thuds suddenly into the wall next to Maglar. A second missile pins the ruffian's arm to the same wall, and from a nearby chair is heard a youthful but forceful voice: "One more move, my large friend, and your wife will be sorely disappointed at the loss of your—shall I say, weapon?"

As the crowd laughs, the characters turn to find that the speaker is a boy of maybe eighteen, dressed in leathers, with a short, hooded cloak drawn over his head to shade his eyes. In his sinewy hand a third knife is poised for throwing. A gleam of pleasure crosses the lad's smile. Something about the way he holds himself gives the impression that he has a courage that few men of the day possess.

As the boy meets Maglar's resentful gaze, the huge ruffian leaves, holding his head down (*and* grabbing the knife out of the wall, but nobody should at first notice this). The young warrior immediately raises his cup and offers drinks on the house, not wanting to spoil the mood of the tavern. If they do not approach him, the youth will approach the characters himself, admiring whatever they managed to do to the ruffian before he intervened.

An Unlikely Job Offer

The boy introduces himself as Ekelar and lets out that his business in Rood is to recruit mercenaries for an unbeatable army which his lord (whom he will, for the moment, refer to as "Morfang") is now gathering. Ekelar offers them employment: the pay is very good, the treatment fair, and there will be glory and adventure to be had. Should any of the characters express further interest in the boy's proposition, it will be explained to them that Morfang is Lord of Tûl Póac in Far Harad (a place of which the vast majority of Northwestern Middle-earth have never even heard) and that he wages war against Lord Morlaen of Umbar (one of the chief architects of the recently concluded Kin-strife of Gondor, now a prominent Corsair leader).

Most characters should (at least initially) be taken aback by so far-fetched sounding a tale. Haradwaith is on the edge of the world as far as the inhabitants of Rood—and indeed of all Eriador—are concerned, wherever this Tûl Póac might be. The name of Morlaen, however, may well be known by characters who have been to Tharbad of late, since the newly independent lordship of Umbar has retained diplomatic ties with King Araphor of Arthedain (what characters may feel about Umbar or the Corsairs will, of course, depend upon their view of the Kin-strife itself).

But perhaps the most vexing question for the townspeople and sojourners alike in Rood is *why on earth* some obscure warlord of Haradwaith has ventured to send as far north as Eriador in search of mercenaries to fight his wars for him. If pressed on this point, Ekelar

will hint that his lord knows well from personal experience of the valor and prowess of the men of Arthedain, who have lived in the shadow of Angmar for more than a hundred years. Ekelar may also add that Morfang once rendered service to the noble House Eketta, and that he has nothing but praise for the trustworthiness of the folk in that region. This last detail may cause a mixed reaction, depending on how the characters are disposed towards House Eketta, which has many enemies among the other noble families of Arthedain).

Such an explanation may or may not satisfy the curiosity of the characters (but it *will,* at any rate, provide them with a distraction to ponder while the murder of Lord Dunhil takes place). Despite his enthusiasm for his lord and his mission, Ekelar is actually quite cautious about giving out information to strangers unless he feels that he can trust them. The boy is actually at the tail-end of his search for mercenaries, and intends to leave for Tharbad the following day with any who choose to accompany him. Ekelar is spending the night at The King's Board inn (#29).

The Murder and the Arrest

When Ciramond learns of the encounter between Maglar and Ekelar in the tavern that evening, he will order the Guard to bring the defeated ruffian into his presence. Then, in private, for a handful of silver and no questions asked, the Captain will relieve Maglar of Ekelar's knife which he stormed out of the tavern with earlier that day. After dismissing the ruffian, Ciramond steals into his master's house.

He finds Tiraloth, assuring his mistress that they shall be rid of her husband once and for all before the night is over. From her Ciramond learns that Dunhil is alone outside on the manor grounds, taking his evening stroll beside the fountain. There Ciramond finds him, and fatally stabs his lord in the back with Ekelar's silver knife, leaving his corpse floating in the now crimson waters of the fountain. Before returning to the Guard House, the murderous Ciramond instructs Tiraloth to wait one hour, and then to call for the servants to summon her husband from the garden.

The murder is discovered, and Ciramond reappears at the manor with his men to haul Dunhil's dead body out of the fountain. Once the murder weapon has been identified, Lady Tiraloth, feigning distress, persuades Ciramond to apprehend this dagger-touting Ekelar at once. Ciramond summons Calimir the Sheriff, and explains the situation to him. Calimir goes to The Kings Board and attempts to arrest the boy, but Ekelar resists, injuring one of Calimir's men as he uses the guard's body to smash his way through a second-story window to a hay wagon below. But Calimir's archers, positioned outside the inn for just such an eventuality, compel the boy to surrender.

The Morning After

Should they sleep through all the events of the night, the characters will nevertheless hear of what happened the next morning. Ekelar is being held in a cell at the Guard House (#9) until his hanging two days hence. If the characters do not seek him out, Ekelar will by some means send word to them that he is innocent and that he needs their help to clear his name before his imminent execution, promising them a hefty reward of silver and honor from his lord, even if they decline the offer to be his mercenaries. The favor of such a powerful warlord, he claims, would be a great reward indeed.

Ekelar rightly believes that he has been framed by someone for the murder. Although he has no way of proving this, Ekelar will inform the characters that his knife went missing the day before in the tavern where they first met. The Sheriff, on the other hand, is convinced that the boy is guilty (though he admits that Ekelar drew no blades on his own men while resisting arrest). Calimir will instruct the characters to stay out of trouble, but they are free to help their friend if they wish so long as the Sheriff is informed of anything they may discover.

Investigation

- The owner of The Kings Board saw Ekelar go up to his room at two in the morning, and did not come down in the night. The innkeeper will go into a long story about how he is a light sleeper, and would have heard the boy in the hallway (especially since Ekelar's room was right next to his own).
- The characters might think to ask some of the young people who hang around the hedge at night if they saw anything, but most of them would have gone home before the murder took place.
- Should the characters make a good impression on him, a certain owner of a local warehouse (#25) who does most of his errands in the dead of night might vouch for the whereabouts of Ekelar. He may even know some other detail, because he is in the habit of watching people (for which reason people get "the creeps" from him).
- Maglar will be watched by one of Ciramond's loyal men to see if the ruffian does anything incriminating, in which case the guard has been instructed to bring him to Ciramond. Should Maglar talk to anyone strange or do anything suspicious, the Captain will promptly arrange his death.
- If the characters are really stuck, they might be able to meet Lord Dunhil's daughter, Tirabeth, who saw the Captain and her mother kissing once.

NPC Reactions

There are several NPCs involved in the plot at this point. Below are listed the reactions that each might have towards the characters and their investigations. Each reaction is only a suggestion considering the overall plot, and is up to the judgment of the GM.

Maglar: If questioned about the murder, Maglar will state his innocence once. Should the characters persist in annoying him he will attempt to crush them into fish bait. Failing to do this will cause the big bully to flee. Maglar may or may not be aware that he is being watched by Ciramond's men, but he is certainly indifferent to Dunhil's murder, and wouldn't mind seeing that young upstart hang.

Tiraloth: As a lady of House Eketta, Tiraloth does not have to answer to anyone, even though she is aware that Ciramond killed Dunhil. She will dismiss anyone that does not have a good story, but may behave nervously if she thinks they can prove anything. She is not experienced in this sort of "Cloak and Dagger" thing, and will be easily roused by a good story. Rather than spilling everything she will attempt to get away (in which case she will head off to Ciramond).

Ciramond: The Captain of the Guard believes he has nothing to fear, being confident that Ekelar will hang for his crime. If accused of any crime, Ciramond will dismiss any but the most convincing evidence, at which point he will arrange for an "accident" to befall his accusers. Towards the end of the scenario (and if it can be done in a dramatic way) he will attempt flight or even combat. Ciramond has nightly visits in his quarters from the Lady Tiraloth, where they consummate their treacherous liaison, but he will have no contact with her now until Ekelar has been hung and the threat of suspicion removed.

Tirabeth: Dunhil's youthful daughter loved her father quite a bit. She is easily swayed by exciting strangers and will show girlish enthusiasm at stories and gifts from characters who are from out of town. Tirabeth is wise enough to know that her mother will never be punished, but she despises Ciramond, and would like to see him go away.

Knights of Eketta: There is a chance that some of the Eketta household knights were more loyal to Lord Dunhil than to Ciramond, and so may help the characters. If not, they will surely report the characters' investigations to Ciramond. At least one of the guard saw Ciramond buy the knife from Maglar.

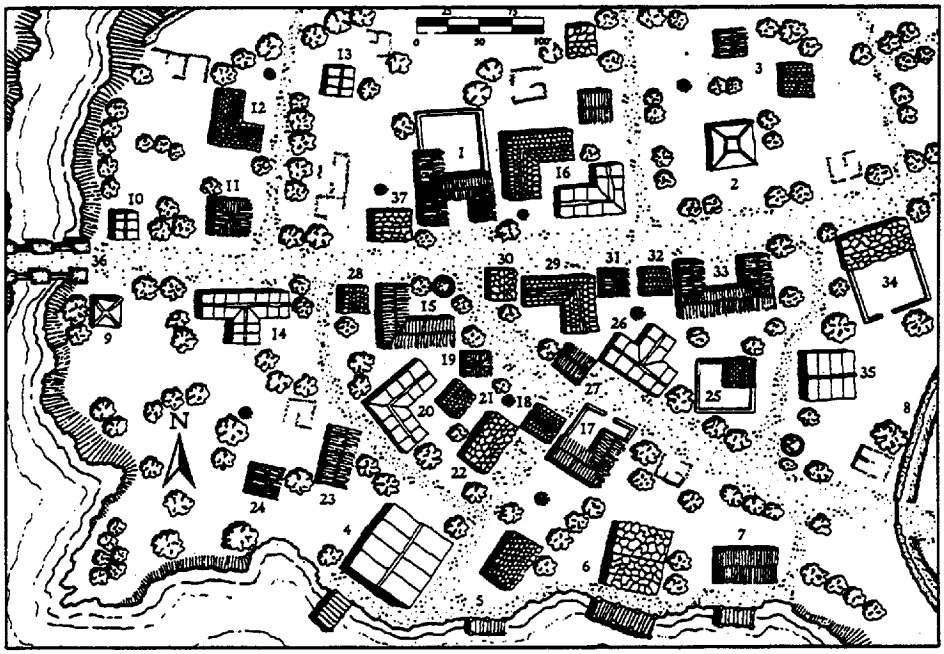
Servants of the Manor: It is possible that one of the servants of the Eketta Manor may know something, but it is also possible that they are loyal to Captain Ciramond.

Ending the Scenario

If the characters can prove anything about Ciramond's guilt in the murder, the Sheriff will hold him until a representative from Bareketta can arrive to pass judgment on him and (possibly) on Tiraloth. If the characters just slay Ciramond, they will have to be able to prove that he was the original killer, or they themselves will face the justice of the clan.

Once freed, Ekelar will take his new friends to Tharbad and thence on a ship bound for the Far South, and see that they are suitably rewarded (but that is definitely another story). To spice up the plot a bit, it is possible that one of the neighboring clans might become involved in the investigation, as they almost all loathe the Eketta clan and would like to see them on the losing end.

The Town of Rood



(*Arnor*: 264; reprinted with permission)

At this time Rood is still a town of some import, and goods pass through it from the north, bound for Bree. The buildings are somewhat less than majestic, but by no means run down. The following is a description of the town during the middle of the Third Age.

1. The Battered Cock: a large disreputable and airy inn. It has a corral for horses, all of which seem to have shed their fleas in or near the Inn. The inn gets its name from the animal fights that are encouraged and often sponsored by its owner, "Bill."
2. Lorn's farmhouse: Lorn's family are, and will always be, sheep-herders. They are renowned for their love of sheep.
3. Private residences.

4-7. Warehouses with docks: filled with food and furs. The owners all wage an ongoing battle against the multitude or rats determined to make their homes here.

8. Hedge and ditch: This is a popular place for young lovers to go at night to watch the stars.
9. Guard House: Well-trained guards man this area. Although vigilant, they seldom have to draw their swords.

10-13. Private residences.

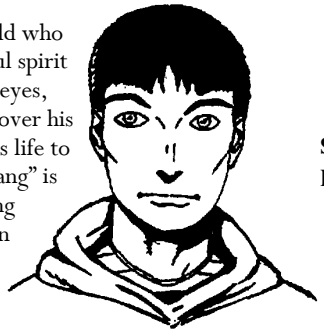
14. Craft Shop and General Store: run by the Rostars. They sell fine hand- made items and general supplies. They are host to a pair of strange people who appear to be Hobbits yet will not admit it. The Rostars are a very old couple, and seek to sell their business.
15. The White Wolf: the best that Rood has to offer. Travelers used to some sort of comfort and with a taste for good wine will find it here. The owner, Jonathan Burlibob, is a veteran of the war of 1409, and came across a great supply of wine following the decimation wrought on Cardolan by the Witch-king's armies (His captain allowed him to keep it as reward for saving his life.).
16. The Sunset: This inn is everything that The White Wolf is not. Only those too poor to afford any other inn will come here.
17. Stables: This place is run by Tobar, who is reputed to be the best horse-groomer in the region.
18. The Black Smith: Gramdrin, a huge Daen man, runs this smithy. He is loud and likes to tell stories that grow more and more outrageous each time.
19. Smokehouse.
20. General Store: Whoever can't afford the crafts shop comes here.
21. Riverman's Emporium: This shop sells supplies necessary for travel along the Baranduin.
22. Distillery: run by Janrivis, a burnt-out veteran of many wars, who now makes a moderate product for private sale.

2 3. Abandoned warehouse.

24. Warehouse: operated by Samuel, a man smart enough to know that the rats will go for the places on the docks first.
25. Pig Farm: run by the ill-reputed Farmer Ted.
26. The Silver Tree: the kind of inn that always has people who look like adventurers in it (If you are whispering, you will notice someone trying to hear what you say.). The Stigmuds are seeking a bouncer to control the daily bar-room brawls.
27. Metal Shop: Galdon the weaponsmith sells fine weapons, and dreams of the day that he can marry and have a son to pass the family business down to. Females who enter his shop will receive a 25% discount and a proposition.
28. Arms Shop: The weapons sold here are so fine they couldn't possibly come from the owner, a drunken former river man named Kevar. It is rumored that a young Dwarf makes deliveries here.
29. The King's Board: This place is named for the time that the king of Arthedain stayed here, though everyone asked will name a different king and a different time. This is frequented by Rangers as a place of preference. There is room for twenty to stay here and at any time 1D10+10 will occupy the place. The prices for rooms are 50% higher here than in the other inns.
30. Servants Quarters: Workers from the King's Board are lodged here.
31. The House of Healing: One healer lives here, whose name is Lisserven. Lisserven is low on healing herbs and has the money to pay for any he might receive.
32. Apothecary Shop: The place is manned by Woden, a former Ranger who studied with a loremaster at Minas Arnor. He seeks to make enough money to buy a shop in a larger town or to become the client of a lord.
33. Eketta house: This is a mansion of stately proportions, there are two floors of elegant art and antiques. The house is ruled by Lord Dunhil and Lady Tiraloth. The place is well protected by Knights trained at Bareketta the ruling house of the Eketta clan. The garrison here numbers ten.
34. Stables.
35. Warehouse: owned and operated by a horribly deformed man who only ventures out at night who is called "The Monster" by the young folks who visit "the hedge" nearby. He is in reality a gentleman and a poet, who was deformed by a fire long ago. He sees a great deal while he runs his errands at night and could be a vital friend to the characters. His name is Gibson.
36. Bridge: crosses a branch of the Baranduin.
37. Storehouse: currently used to store fowl.

NPC PROFILES (*RQ3* STATS)

EKELAR



Ekelar is a lad of medium height and build who is possessed of a great amount of youthful spirit and courage. He has black hair and blue eyes, wears leathers and usually keeps a hood over his head to disguise his features. He owes his life to his lord, Konar (cf. *OH* 2: 15-19; "Morfang" is a pseudonym), who found him wandering the Dagorlad (at the time he did not even remember his own name). Konar took the boy in and named him Ekelar, training him to fight and to take care of himself.

Ekelar will come across as something of a zealot (he seems to have a bit more courage than appropriate for a youth). This is due to the strange brainwashing techniques used on Konar's men, which cause Ekelar to view himself as all but invincible. Because the boy is used to refinement he will start his search for mercenaries at the White Wolf, and then head to the Silver Tree.

The man called Konar has a wide reputation as a cutthroat, yet in person he is a likable man. He is in the service of Mûrabêth who rules in Umbar at this time. Konar is opposed by Morlaen, who has mustered an army and sent it to siege the fortress. Konar sent out Ekelar to gather mercenaries to repel the assault, and Ekelar does not have very long to do this so he sends men straight there from every town. He comes there with notes verifying their identities. Rood is one of Ekelar's last stops, and he will probably stay with whatever group he assembles from Arthedain.

STR	13	**CON**	16	**SIZ**	13	**INT**	12
POW	10	**DEX**	20	**APP**	15	**HP:**	15

Skills: Climb 80%, Dodge 75%, Jump 80%, Ride 30%, Swim 60%, Throw 90%, Fast Talk 30%, Orate 50%, Speak Westron 40%, Rhovanion 35%, First Aid 50%, Human Lore 60%, Read Westron 15%, World Lore 30%, Conceal 50%, Devise 35%, Sleight 55%, Martial Arts: 75%,* Quick Draw Knife 80%,° Spot Weakness 50%,† Listen 60%, Scan 55%, Search 50%, Track 40%, Hide 50% Sneak 50%, Knife (Hand) 80%, Knife Thrown 99%, Fist 60%, Kick 55%, Grapple 65%, Broadsword 35%.

* This skill represents Ekelar's chance to do something fancy with a knife (e.g., knock a weapon out of someone's hand, hit a small target, or pin someone's sleeve to the wall).

† This skill enables the user to pierce armor to a number of points equal to one tenth of the skill level (i.e.. Ekelar is able to circumvent 5 AP).

° This skill negates the penalty for changing (or drawing) weapons of SR 3 or less.

Equipment: leather armor with cuirbouilli reinforcement, silver knives inlaid with dragon carvings (+ 1 damage), standard traveling equipment, 100 silver pieces.

MAGLAR

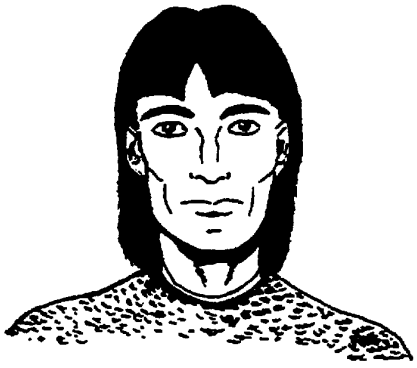
Maglar is a fairly evil and bigoted man of Dunadan blood who hates most everyone. He likes to pick bar-fights, but simply leaves the bar when he grows tired.

STR	18	**CON**	16	**SIZ**	18	**INT**	9
POW	9	**DEX**	13	**APP**	8	**HP:**	17

Skills: Dodge 30%. Throw 40%, Offend people 60%, Listen 40%, Sneak 35%, Push people around 55%, Fist 70%, Grapple 80%, Club 65%.

Equipment: padded armor, knife, 12 silver, weighted gloves (+2 damage).

CIRAMOND



Ciramond is well-respected as Captain of the Guard at the manor house. He is tall and slim of build, with black hair, and brown eyes. He is handsome, but has a cruel face.

STR	16	**CON**	15
SIZ	15	**INT**	14
POW	12	**DEX**	16
APP	14	**HP:**	15

Skills: Boat 35%, Climb 50%, Dodge 50%, Ride 45%, Swim 40%, Orate 45%, Speak Westron 50%, Speak Adûnaic 35%, Speak Sindarin 15%, First Aid 35%, Human Lore 30%, Read Adûnaic 30%, Read Westron 50%, World Lore 25%, Listen 40%, Scan 50%, Search 35%, Track 25%, Sneak 30%, Plot and Plan 35%, Bastard Sword 50%, Eket 45%, Long bow 45%, Knife 45%, Fist 45%, Shield 45%

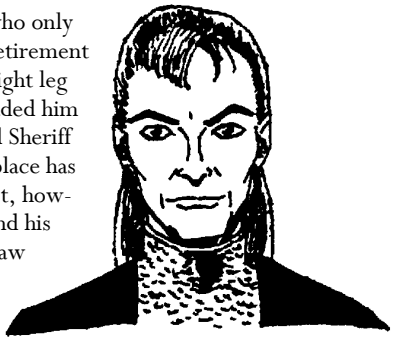
Equipment: chainmail, eket, shield, bastard sword, 25 silver.

EKETTA HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS

Skills: Boat 25%, Dodge 35%, Ride 35%, Swim 25%, Speak Westron 30%, Speak Adûnaic 15%, First Aid: 30%, Listen 35%, Scan 40%, Search 30%, Track 25%, Broad Sword 40%, Eket 45%, Knife 45%, Fist 45%

Equipment: ringmail, broadsword, eket, knife.

Ekelar



Calimir is a good and just man who only wishes to be of some use in his retirement He used to be a Ranger until a slight leg wound and increasing age persuaded him to slow down. He was appointed Sheriff in Rood two years ago, and the place has been relatively peaceful. He can't, however, be in two places at once, and his men leave a lot to be desired as law enforcers.

He is tall and slim, with tough wiry muscles, that are corded like pieces of twine. He has gray hair and blue eyes, his voice is commanding yet not overpowering. At the end of the Kin-strife he performed a favor for Eldacar, and for that he was given a sword which Eldacar used in battle once. Calimir is proud of this and uses it as a symbol of leadership.

STR	15	**CON**	13	**SIZ**	15	**INT**	14
POW	12	**DEX**	14	**APP**	14	**HP:**	14

Skills: Boat 35%, Dodge 45%, Jump 35%, Speak Westron 40%, Speak Adûnaic 30%, First aid 45%, Human Lore 35%, Listen 45% Scan 50%, Search 45%, Track 75%, Hide 50%, Sneak 45%, Broad Sword 60%, Self Bow 45%, Dagger 50%, Fist 60%, Grapple 50%, Kick 40% Martial arts 30%

Equipment: broadsword used by Eldacar (+1 damage), knife, chainmail.

Calimir's Men

These men are the rabble assigned to Calimir. They are not smart enough to be thieves so they became soldiers. They try to get the job done, but are easily distracted.

STR	10	**CON**	10	**SIZ**	14	**INT**	9
POW	8	**DEX**	12	**APP**	9	**HP:**	12

Skills: Avoid Work 45%, Dodge 25%, Speak Westron 30%, Intimidate 45%, Scan 40%, Fist 45% Broad Sword 40%, Knife 45%, Self bow 45%

Equipment: ringmail, sword, knife, self bow (10 arrows), cards or dice.

The Legacy of Calimendil

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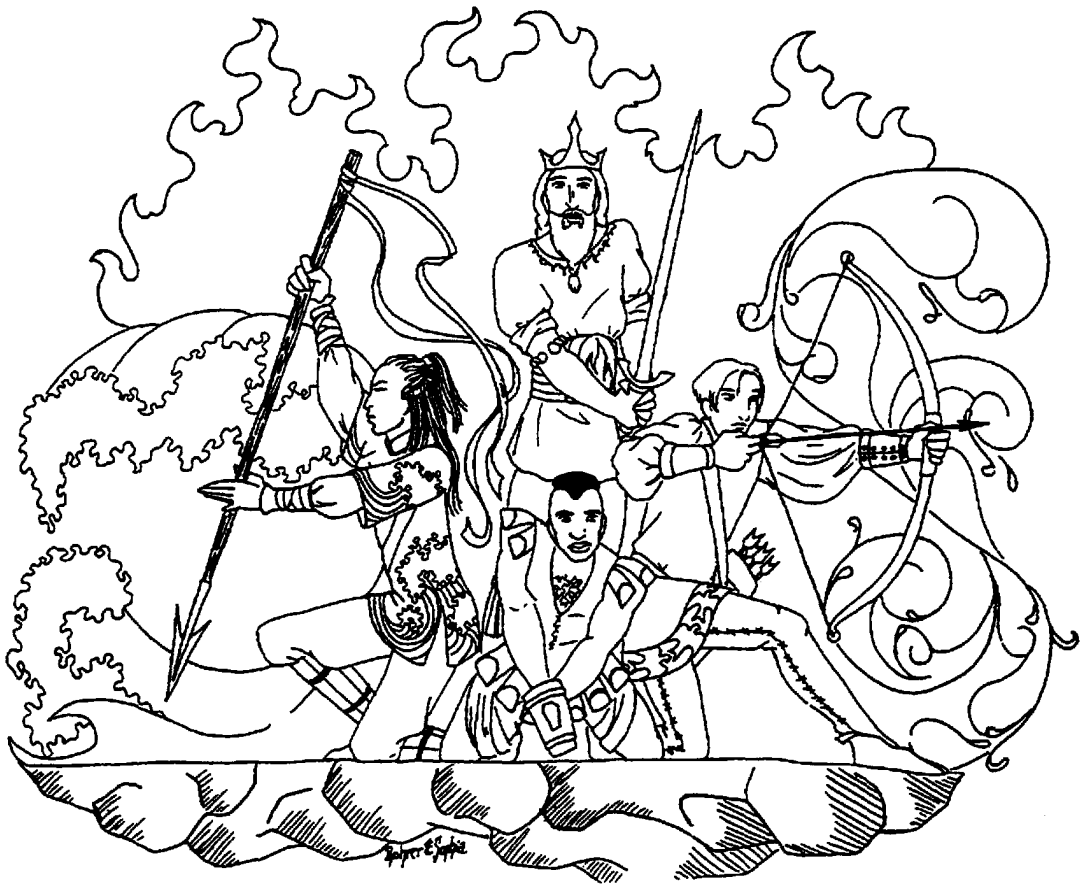
This adventure is set in Rhudaur and/or Cardolan in the year 1643 of the Third Age. It involves the finding and recovery of four magical weapons which had belonged to King Calimendil of Cardolan and his lieutenants (some of whom perished in the wilderness of Rhudaur in 1235). The search for these weapons may eventually lead characters to follow the trail of one of Calimendil's lieutenants into the lair of a lost tribe of degenerate Dwarves, who may or may not be cooperative in helping the characters to obtain what they have come for.

Preamble

In T.A. 1235, Cameth Brin was besieged by Cardolan. At the very moment of victory the Orc armies surprised the armies of Cardolan turning it into a rout. A huge section of the royalty and army died that day. Unbeknown to most was that several groups of extremely loyal and able men took the body of the King away from Cameth Brin. These groups were hunted down by Orcs and Wargs. The groups consisted of Tardor plus 15 pikemen; Saral plus 24 mixed soldiers, bearing with them the King's body, and Ilan plus 10 mixed soldiers.

Each group of lieutenants went in a different direction. As Saral went along the Mitheithel River his company was attacked, losing the King's sword and several soldiers, and the group was eventually surrounded and killed. Tardor went via Rivendell and was attacked in En Egladil near a river. Ilan's group made it most of the way home but was attacked and killed to a man by a marauding band of Trolls and Orcs. Tardor did not survive, and his group was leaderless, panicked and confused. [Note: the exact locations for all of these events may be chosen according to the GM's preference.]

The survivors of Tardor's group found a cave entrance during a great storm and inside stumbled upon a tribe of Petty-dwarves. They fought their way through and down the Dwarven tunnels to the next level which the Petty-dwarves had just started to explore. During the next days the Petty-dwarves made several forays down to "deal" with the problem but each time were repulsed. They eventually closed the connecting tunnel with the large doors hoping to starve them out. The only food the soldiers could find were glowing fungi. After years of eating these they were slowly transformed into strange undead beings.



The Four Weapons

Tardor, Saral and Ilan were all right-hand men of King Calimendil, brave and mighty lieutenants. Mighty as they were, some of their fighting prowess was from the bonded magic weapons that Calimendil gave them. These were four weapons: a sword, hammer, bow and spear. Individually the powers were quite small but when activated and joined they were mighty indeed.

Inactive they seem to be just + 5 weapons (a very good roll will show that they have other abilities). When activated by immersing them into their corresponding element, they become +5 and can cast the first level spell from their corresponding spell list once per day (i.e. the Sword which is activated by fire uses the spell list Fire Law).

To fully utilize their powers they must be touched together. Their powers go up by the number of weapons touched. Thus if three were touched then they would all

be +15 and able to cast up to 3rd level the spells from their corresponding spell list. They would still only be able to cast any spell once from the list per day. The weapons, their elements and wielders are as follows:

weapon	element	wielder
sword	fire	king calimendil
war hammer	earth	saral
bow	wind	ilan
spear	water	tardor

When initially found, the sword appears to be old and rusty. A successful Use Items partially activates it, surrounding it with a magical aura as though new. A very good Use Items roll would give hints as to how it could be activated (raw elements, all the heat being sucked from the immediate area etc). Each weapon is attracted to the others when inactive. The weapon will either gently tug in the direction or possess the current holder and make them run towards the next weapon. Activating the weapons might become an adventure in itself (through the breath of a fire dragon, magical fire, wind, and so on; be creative).

If the holder of the sword is Dúnadan, you could introduce some very good political maneuvering in Cardolan. Push him/her as the reborn King/Queen, etc. Ardagor could also be brought in as a possible threat, as he is doing some major horse-trading around T.A. 1643. The holder of the weapon will also experience dreams derived from the original wielder's past, all of which may give hints/clues to the weapon and its origin:

Possible Dreams

1D10	Scene	Description
1-2	Calimendil viewing his campaign against the Hillmen	Standing on a hilltop, a large army of pikemen surrounds a fortress [It checks to recognnize Cameth Brin if they've ever been there]. A feeling of self-satisfaction and pride comes over you. Several armored people stand beside you.
3-4	Calimendil during the rout at Cameth Brin	Panic and dispair as the screams of the dying fill the air. The sounds of battle are almost overwhelming. Orcs and men swarm towards you. "Stand firm!" you yell as you ready for the attack [It is dark and they may notice Cameth Brin].
5-6	Calimendil with his Queen	You stand inside a fortress before a garden. A lady in fine clothes and an unadorned fillet comes towards you smiling. A lady-in-waiting follows behind.
7-8	Calimendil in his youth	A middle-aged man in fine clothes is reaching down towards you with a kind but stern face. He seems to be leaning over something.
9-10	Calimendil fighting his last stand with Tardor	Daylight, a lightly forested area. Orcs and wargs sweep down towards you and your group. You see a figure in purple-trim with a ram's head emblazoned on his shield fighting three Orcs. A sharp pain lances through your body.

The Site of the Petty-dwarf Caves

This section of river flows reasonably slowly. It is surrounded by low shrubs on both sides with the southern side having clusters of trees. The shrubs come right up to the bank of the river. Near the sand bank a Kraken has found an underwater cave which has made for a very convenient home; the cave, however, is also a entrance/exit to the lower level of the Petty-dwarf lair.

The Kraken stays here during the day and patrols the area looking for food and guarding it's territory during the night. The sand bank is quite solid but if a character stays still they will slowly sink. The Kraken has collected treasure of: 40sp, 2 Tiaras with glass gems (10gp) and a Shield (40% of the normal weight). ***Stastics for the Kraken are listed in the table on p. 29.***

Some 90' from the northern bank is a large mound (50' high) that dominates the skyline. It is covered with grass and small shrubs. On the northern end what appears to be a mud slide can be discerned. If they examine the area they may find a broken sword (30%) or human bones (20%). It would take 50 rounds to clear a-way enough rubble to gain access to the tunnel leading down. If a long pole or the like is pushed through they will notice that after 5' it gets very easy to push through. On the north side of the mound is a grassy plain extending some 1.5 miles in all directions.

Encountering the Petty-dwarves

The initial reaction to the party will be one of violence, but when Marat arrives (some three rounds after the alarm has been raised) he will proclaim them to be gods from the Upper Heaven, and all courtesies will be offered. Language will be a problem, but the Dwarves will attempt to use some form of sign-language to get ideas across.

Thortan is making a "play" for the leadership of the Petty-dwarves and will be intensely wary of the party. He will try to poison them or otherwise disprove their god-hood, eventually persuading Hooton to compel the characters to prove their divine identity by destroying the "dark gods," which are actually the entombed remnants of the rout at Cameth Brin who, as a result of eating the fungi in the caves, have been slowly turned into living fungi, burning with the need to protect their now long-dead commander.

If friendships are made and deals struck between them, Hooton or Marat will ask the characters to contact other Petty-dwarf tribes. Vague maps will be drawn showing a long fell and

lake in the Ettenmoors above Rivendell (cf. "Kine's Horn" adventure in 1st edition boxed *MERP* rules). If the party knows that the Petty-dwarves are no longer there and offers to find these others, Elrond may know of such groups and will offer information of their whereabouts. Getting to Rivendell may become an adventure in its own right.

If the parry presents Hooton with any unwanted magic items, then he will give them gems in addition to one or both of their own items (the scroll and/or brooch), or gems and herbs.

The Petty-dwarves

The physical appearance of Petty-dwarves is very similar to normal Dwarves but they are smaller and hairier, with much better eyesight in the dark. The effects of inbreeding are starting to show with some being deformed or mentally challenged. The worst cases are killed and used to feed the fungi plantations, as are any of their number who die.

The Petty-dwarf leaders are: Hooton, tribal elder (8th fighter), Marat, tribal priest (7th), Thortan, warrior leader (6th). Hooton and Marat are the power brokers here, but Thortan wishes to move out this "older" generation in order to get new blood into power. Hooton is slightly retarded and is 170 years old. He tries to be wise like his father but only sometimes manages it. He has begun to stoop and has jet black hair like all of his tribe. Marat is 184 years old but acts and moves like he is only 130. Thortan has "hit" middle age (about 110). He is fat for a Petty-dwarf and likes to boss everyone around. They all have a gnarled limbs, thin heads and wispy beards giving an ugly appearance. ***Stasticsfor the Petty-dwarves are listed in the table on p. 29.***

The Upper Caves

All the walls are roughly hewn but the Petty-dwarves have been here for 300—500 years so they have tried to make it as comfortable as possible. There is dim light throughout this level, as bright lights blind them for twice the normal length. All their weapons and items are non-magical but due to their manufacture and materials are +5. Unfortunately, these lose their bonus after prolonged exposure to sunlight.

1. This sloping, moist tunnel leads downwards. Movement is easy so long as sudden movements are avoided. Running up would be a hard MM. It would be hard to notice (-10) that the floor is actually mud with a hard, thin crust Anything more than 70lbs will break the crust and fall into the mud. It is very sticky, sucking them down in 5 rounds (or 10 if little movement/struggle). They will suffocate in 5 more rounds. The mud is 25' deep. The obvious way across is by magic (Teleport or the like). Someone could climb around the edge but this would be a hard (-10) MM with a roll every 20.' Sounds of digging and voices (in a strange language) can be easily heard.
2. There are five Petty-dwarves digging a new tunnel system with two guards paying little attention (gambling, perhaps). The guards will raise the alarm as soon as they notice the party and move to defend the others. If attacked, they will hold position and wait for reinforcements, which will arrive in 2 rounds: Thortan plus four guards and then Marat and Hooton 1 round later. A guard is kept on all new diggings as monsters of the underdark are sometimes uncovered (much to the detriment of the tribe which has been decimated by such events).
3. There are a number of stools and a table here. It is a restroom for the workers from #2. A curtain blocks the view into #4. The family from #4 uses this as their living room after the workers have left. Personal items of little worth are strewn around with some colored cloth on the walls.
4. A family of four (two adults and two youths) live here. Bedding and personal items can be seen. In the southernmost corner a loose rock will reveal a cache of raw gems worth 30gp, it is easy (+0) to find. If a battle does break-out the male will join in using a stone spear (+5 due to it's manufacture and materials). One child is mildly deformed.
5. There will usually be several Petty-dwarves here talking and discussing issues. This is the mid-point between the religious and warrior sections of the tribe. Parts of the walls are decorated with symbols and pictures of historical significance to the tribe. Two of the symbols are magical and will generate a wall of stone between them. Both the elder and priest know the command word to activate. It will last for 10 rounds during which time they will regroup to attack and defend their home. There are a number of tables/chairs and stools around. The elder and priest could be here (both 30%, either 40%).
6. This is the communal eating area. A large table and chairs dominate the room. Eating utensils are on benches on the west wall.
7. The main well for the tribe is here plus several sleeping areas for the workers from #8. Buckets and other gardening implements are around the well.
8. The walk here glow with a pale green tinge. In neat rows boxes full of fungi grow, some quite large and colorful. This is where they get all of their food and will defend it to the death. There will be several adults and children here at any given time tending the plots. Herbs such as Edram, Attanar, Zur and Breldiar are grown here.
9. The elder and his wife plus the priest live here in curtained-off quarters. All know of the secret door leading to a safe hole and most of the tribe's wealth. There is a small chest hidden under the bed (easy to perceive) that has 90gp worth of uncut gems. There is also the elder's armor which is so impressively worked that it gives the wearer +10 to Leadership and Influence. His +10 short sword is in it's scabbard hanging on the wall. The priest has a dub and an amulet (+2 adder) here. Both areas have a bed and various personal effects.
10. This is usually home to the older members of the tribe, but on formal occasions it is used as the audience room where Hooton officiates. The secret door is hidden by an old, slightly tattered tapestry. It is hard to find (-10). The formal area is partitioned off by a heavy curtain showing a particularly large dragon being fought by a warrior Petty-dwarf. There is a slightly raised platform on top of which sits a plain stone throne.

11. This is the safe room which holds the wealth of the tribe. In a trapped, locked chest (a 5th level paralysis poison lasting for five hours) is: 250bp, 500tp, 60sp, a scroll of Telekinesis and a brooch of +10 vs Elemental Magic. There is a small amount of bedding, table, chairs and food stored here.
12. This is home to a family of five. Bedding and personal items can be found.

13. This is home to a family of four. Bedding and personal items can be found. One of the children is severely handicapped.
14. This is home to a family of five. Bedding and personal items can be found. Two of the children are mongoloid.
15. This is the bathing area for the tribe. Water bubbles up from the bottom. There are separate times for female and male bathing.
16. This tends to be the "pub" area and is frequented mainly by the soldiers. Two tables and several chairs are here. The wall has been passably decorated with splashes of color. There is a primitive still in the SW corner, which supplies the tribe with a potent brew made from fungi. It is mildly hallucinogenic.
17. Thortan and his new wife live here along with another couple. All newly-weds have to spend their first year together here. The beds are in the most easterly sections and can be curtained off with heavy drapes.
18. There will always be an elite and normal guard here. The door is covered with warding symbols (which have no real effect except on morale) and is barred and locked. These guards will not leave except under very usual circumstances. Beyond the doors a tunnel with dripping water from the ceiling leads downwards. About 50' down the Dwarves long ago tried to block the tunnel, but gave up when they were attacked by the "dark gods."
19. The barracks for the soldiers. There will be an elite plus four normal guards who bed here (plus the four from # 1 and # 18).

The Fate of Calimendil and His Men

Now undead, the ill-fated men have become divided into four different groups (see "The Lower Caves"). The group that inhabits #5—9 are translucent water ghouls controlled by a semi-sentient slime in #7. They are resistant to fire-based attacks (½ damage) but take double damage from liquid-destroying attacks. They are also very hard (-20) to see before they attack and thus usually get surprise.

The group in #10—14 are bluish in color as they ate the fungi in # 11. They are mould skeletons and exude such a foul smell that all within a 15 radius must save vs 5th level fear or attack at -20 for the duration of the battle. All their weapons and armor are shiny and new, kept clean by the mould.

The group in # 15—19 are all greater skeletons guarding the tomb of Tardor in # 17. These are the most human-looking of all, the fungi responding to the hosts' need. They are also the most intelligent, having defensive and offensive strategies. If a holder of another bonded weapon makes themselves known and proclaims himself to be one of Ilan, Saral or Calimendil or even from the "new" King sent to reclaim the body of Tardor, they will obey him/her.

The group in #22—27 all became insane when transformed. They gibber and drool constantly and have taken on nightmarish appearances. They fight without rhyme or reason and will attack each other (25%) if they get within 10.'

Stastics for the creatures are listed in the table on p. 29.

Note: Skeletons are unaffected by bleeding, and all Slash crits become Crush crits.

The Lower Caves

After one hour of being in this level all characters (except Dwarves) must save vs a 5th level fear attack or suffer claustrophobia (all actions at -20 for the duration and unable to make rational/intelligent decisions). Because of the glowing fungi there is sufficient light Elves or Dwarves to see clearly, but others will need artificial light.

The area is dank, and water continually drips from the ceiling in most places. The air has a sweet smell to it. The tunnels were formed by an old underground river system which has long since dried up. Most of the fungi here would be worth money to a Sage/Herbalist as all have interesting properties (perhaps 200—400gp for a sample of each kind). But care must be taken in storage, with no sunlight and little moisture.

1. There is a floor trap just before you get to this room. It was dug when they first arrived and has never been tended since. Anyone falling into it will take 2 C puncture crits from the spikes on the bottom. A number of Petty-dwarf skeletons are here (Hooton would be impressed if they were brought back with the party for burial). The pool here is rank and stagnant, anyone drinking from it has a 30% chance of falling very ill. There is diffuse light from the glowing fungi in the tunnels to #2 and #4.
2. There is a Petty-dwarf skeleton here. Little remains of it, and it is covered in fungi. There is a floor trap in the tunnel leading to #3, anyone falling into it will take two C puncture crits from the spikes at the bottom.
3. This room is quite dry, and in the west corner there is a slight mound, hard (-10) to notice. If this was scraped away, a human skeleton would be revealed. His armor and weapon are now rusted, but his shield is

still usable, and is in fact a +5 shield. A smell, hard (-10) to notice comes from #10.

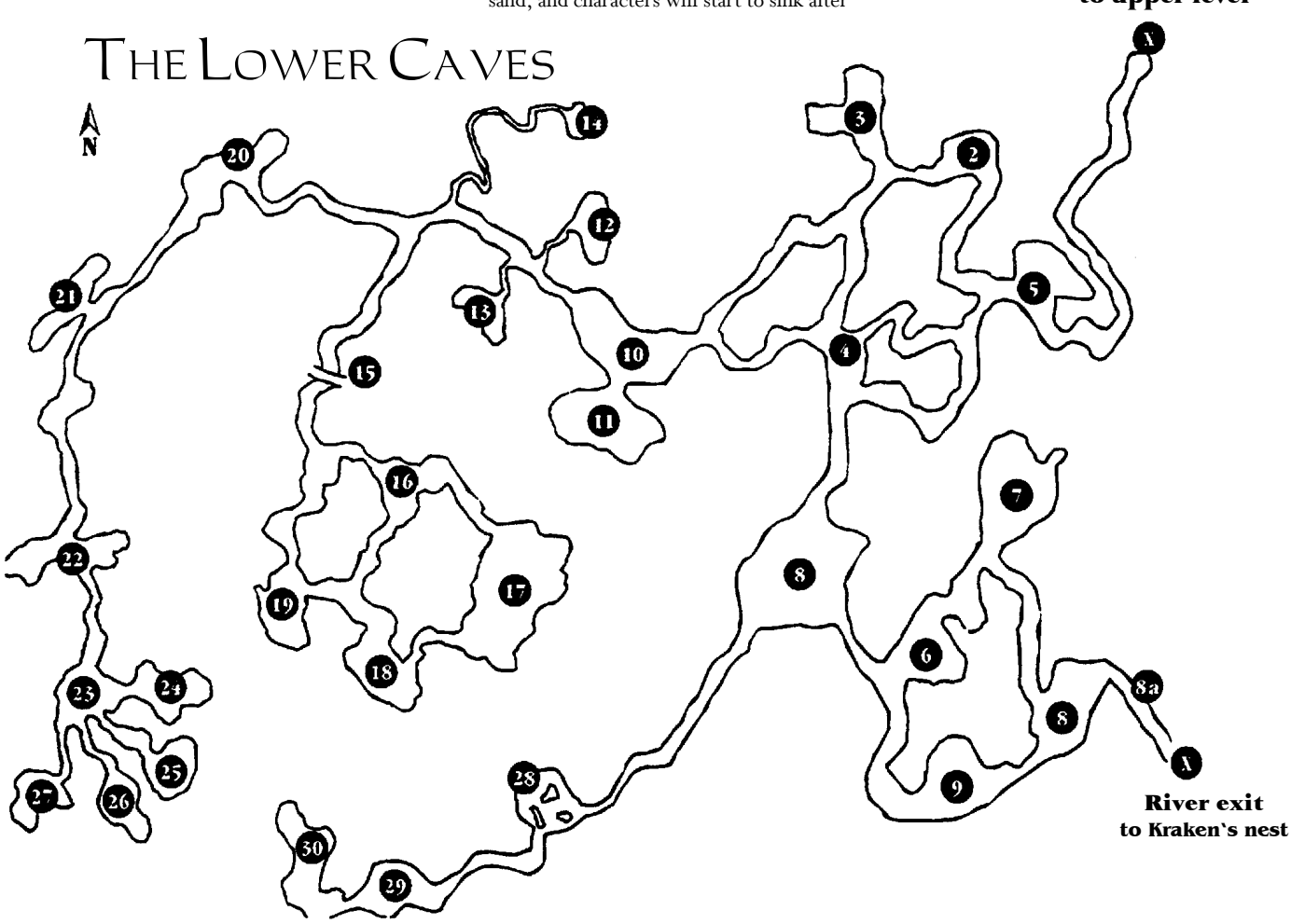
4. Again, like # 1, the pool here is rank and stagnant. Anyone drinking from it has a 30% chance of felling very ill. There is diffuse light from the glowing fungi in the tun-neb to #1 and #2. A smell could be noticed (hard, -10) coming from #10. There is a floor trap in the tunnel leading to # 10, anyone felling into it will take two C puncture crits from the spikes.
5. This room is 1.5' to 3.5' deep in water. There will be two ghouls searching for food in here. Three others will join them 2 rounds later. The wake of their movement, hard (-10) to notice, may alert the party to their presence and coming attack. The slime in #7 controls the attack and they will concentrate on one or two characters, trying to drag them into the water and off to the slime to be eaten. Two successful attacks resulting in B or greater crits will mean that character has been overborne. Due to their translucent nature they are very hard (-20) to perceive, and all in the party who cannot see the attacks coming must lower their DBs by 10. Water flows slowly through the room from #6 to #28. If the party is too strong for the ghouls, they will retreat to #7. Two ghouls will attempt to drag a character to the slime while the others harass the party. It will take them four rounds to deliver the character and two to get back. If the party has made noise or has attacked the blue skeletons in #10— 14, the ghouls, may have heard it (30% chance) and will be on the ready.
6. Most of this room is under 3' of water. There is little of note except for a dry patch in the east corner. Fungi adorn the walls, providing a dim light. The sound of water splashing can be heard from # 8/8A.
7. The water here is 3'—5' deep. In the deepest section (NE corner) lives the slime that controls the ghouls. Due to it's size, it can attack two targets, possessing the same special resistance as the ghouls to fire and liquid-based attacks. The dry patch is actually slow quicksand, and characters will start to sink after eight rounds and be totally submerged after five (or ten if they avoid movement) . The slime will retreat to its lair if it gets below 25% hits or is out-classed by the party. The sound of water splashing can be heard from #8/8A. It will take the slime eight rounds to dissolve clothes and/or armor, and forty rounds to fully eat/dissolve a character it has siezcd.

7 A. This is the lair of the slime. Bones and the like are scattered around. The armor and weapons from the ghoul soldiers are here, most of which are rusted. A +10 sword with +10 soft leather armor could be salvaged, but great care would have to be taken with the armor lest it disintegrate (It would have to be dried and reworked by a learner worker to be usable.). There is also 9gp, 15sp and 43bp on the floor.

8. Most of this room is under 2' of water. Water can be seen coming out of the NE corner wall, beyond which is a tunnel leading to the Kraken's lair. If enlarged, water will pour from the entrance of this tunnel for 10 rounds before subsiding (knocking over anyone standing in its path). There are fungi on the walls and stalactites.

8A. This 3.5' high tunnel leads to the Kraken's lair, a distance of 100' along a twisty, slippery tunnel.

9. This room is empty. The ghouls never use it because it is dry (They can only stay out of the water for 10—15 minutes at most).
10. The ceiling of this room is sparsely covered with blue-topped fungi, which exudes quite a stink. Any loud noise will attract the skeletons in #12 and #13. At any given time there is a 15% chance that one is here or in #11.



11. The blue-topped fungi here are particularly abundant, thickly covering the walls and ceilings. The smell here is very pungent and all present must save vs. a 3rd level attack or swoon under its aroma. The floor has a spongy feel to it and is actually one large fungus. The pool is clear and anyone drinking from it will recover 1D10 hits.
12. These are the quarters for two blue skeletons. Because the walls are covered in the blue fungi they are hard (-10) to spot and will usually attack with surprise. Any noise will attract the others from #13. One has a metal head-band which increases RR bonuses (OB is transferred on a 5/1 basis) while the other has a +10 Short sword.
13. These are the quarters for two blue skeletons. Because the walls are covered in the blue fungi they are hard (-10) to spot and will usually attack with surprise. Any noise will attract the others from #12.
14. This long, narrow tunnel leads to a small room which is home to a variety of fungi that produce oxygen. As the party moves up the tunnel there is a 5% per 20' (cumulative) of a naked flame igniting the super-oxygenated air into a fireball. All in the tunnel will receive three B heat crits and a +50 (no DB) Ram/Butt attack as the air rushes in. The super-oxygenated air will begin to affect the characters at 5% per 20 for all activities (cumulative) as they become silly and have impaired judgement until -25% is reached for MMs and -45% for static MMs. If this could be successfully delivered to Dwarves or a mining guild they would pay handsomely for it (100-l50gp).
15. This seems to end in a pool but it continues on in a U-shape with the lower section filled with water. An easy swim MM will get them to the other side but care must be taken with the storage of their packs, etc.

15A. As the party enters this area, they may notice (easy, +0) that their light becomes diminished. This is because of a permanent Shade spell (+25 to hiding). There is always a guard on duty here who will alert the others. Their tactics will be as follows: one is in #17 and will make some noise to attract the party. The skeletons may follow the party, depending on which way it goes. If the party enters #16, the skeleton in #17 will use a Bull-Roarer of Fog Summoning to fill the tunnels with a thick fog. This fog will hopefully obscure vision, confuse the party, and conceal the numbers and actions of the skeletons [Note that the latter know this area intimately and have practiced such tactics for 400-600 years]. Each has "clackers" attached to their shields to make lots of noise. Two from # 19 will move around making noise to drive them towards # 17 and #18, where there are floor traps spanning the width of the tunnel, with a plank across the center. Anyone running down the middle of the tunnel may therefore avoid a fall, but anyone feeling their way along the walls will suffer two B crush crits. The skeletons in # 17 and # 18 will then join the battle, using their knowledge of the traps to flee if need be. If the party goes towards #19, the two in # 19 will move to # 18, while the one in # 17 will go right around and attack from behind via # 19. The other will move to #16, attacking the middle of the party If the party behaves otherwise, a combination of the above tactics may be used. This room is dry, and footprints can be seen everywhere.

16. This room is also dry with visible footprints. The traps in tunnels going to # 17 and 18 are the same. Two B crush crits and a plank across the middle of the tunnel.
17. In the NE corner is a cairn holding the body of Tardor. It would take 10 rounds to uncover the body. If the party is still in good shape, the GM might have him rise up as a skeleton lord. He is dressed in his + 5 Chain, Helm with gold timings, gauntlets, shield + 5 and Spear. The spear is plain looking but of very good quality (See the introduction section for more information on it and its abilities.). He still has a pouch with 45gp in it. Along the moist SE wall are the ever-present fungi. The skeleton here is the leader. He has the Bull-Roarer, a +15 Hand Axe, Rigid Leather, shield and a chest amulet (a black gem in the middle with "Good" written around it. The gem detaches and, when attached to an object and the word "Good" is spoken, it affects the boject as a Warm Solid spell. Unfortunately, it is active even when on the amulet, and will always reappear magically in the owner's possession. The last person to hold the amulet is considered to be the owner. The gem will stick to anything, necessitating an adjustment of OB.
18. The skeletons have made this room their barracks. Four beds of old thread-bare cloth are neady arranged along the south wall. There is a crude set of table and chairs made from rocks. If a close observation is made, various gambling tools will be discerned. The skeleton here has Rigid Leather, a shield and sword.
19. The two skeletons here have Rigid Leather, shields and sword. One will be the guard that raised the alarm. If need be, the skeletons will hide in a recess in the NW wall and attack the party after it has passed. An old blanket provides concealment and is ver hard (-20) to spot.
20. The pool here is only several inches deep. The north wall is covered with fungi and teems with life. If eaten, the fungi increase virility by 100% (which explains the amount of life here). Strange noises can be heard (hard, -10) coming from #23.
21. This room is covered in fungi and glow-worms. If all lights are extinguished then the exquisite beauty of this room will entrance and uplift all who behold it Exhaustion levels are halved and if any are bards they will write a sonnet that will wring the hearts of many a lover (1000 experience points to the bard).
22. The southern exit has been blocked off, and a passage through can be made in 60 rounds. The pool is only 5" deep and the walls are covered with fungi that glow with a sickly green light Strange noises can be heard (easy, +0) coming from #23.
23. Strange structures are built and destroyed here. The insane soldiers were put here and have been transformed into hideous, nightmarish creatures. Anyone who sees them must save vs. a 5th level fear attack or run away for 1D10 rounds. The noise of breaking down the barrier will (35% chance each) attract an insane skeleton from whatever "project" he was working on. All will be attracted by a battle. There will be at least one here, 30% of two and 15% for three. Randomly select which are where. In this room (and #24—27) are the same sickly green glowing fungi on the walls. If eaten, a save vs a 15th level attack must be made to avoid going permanendy insane.
24. The monster in here has three arms with an appendage coming out of its forehead. A jumble of rock, clothing, and the like is strewn on the floor.
25. The monster here is like a cross between a crocodile and a human: green, scaly skin and a large set of jaws. Treat a C crit or better as an A crush crit.
26. The monster here has three legs and the top twisted 180 degrees so that it walks forwards but sees backwards. It oozes green pus. On two of the legs are magical Boots of Speed II (once per day, see Speed I for more information), though it does not know how to use them.
27. The monster here has six eyes, no hair and is transparent (All its innermost working parts are visible).
28. This room is dry(ish) and has three large boulders scattered around. There is nothing else to be seen except for the ever-present fungi.
29. In here live a number of albino water
30. creatures. Light scares them and sunlight will kill them. They are very hard to catch but could fetch a good price with a circus or the like (9gp each). There is a light covering of fungi.

Encounter Table

Name	lvl	class	hits	AT	DB	Sh	OB	MM	Notes
Kraken									
Kraken	15	—	150	no	DB	n	8SGr	20	3 AT; 2nd Cr (> C crit)
Petty Dwarves									
Hooton	8	W	58	RL	so	Y	7Sbs	S	+10 weapon; +10 vs influ
Marat	7	A	64	no	10	N	62cl	S	+ 5 club;+2 Adder
Thortan	6	W	84	RL	45	Y	100bs	IS	+ 10 weapon
Elite Guard	4	W	62	RL	4S	Y	88bs	10	—
Guard	3	W	S3	SL	40	Y	78bs	5	—
Males	2	—	45	no	10	N	54ss	0	—
Females	1	—	35	no	5	N	35cl	0	—
Young	0	—	20	no	0	N	23cl	0	—
Skeletons*									
Blue Skeletons	5	W	90	SL	55	Y	74bs	IS	repulsion 15' radius; AT -20
Greater Skeletons	5	W	100	RL	55	Y	78bs	20	—
Insane Skeletons	S	W	100	SL	3S	N	78cl	20	5th lvl fear 10' radius
Skeleton Lord	8	W	135	Ch	70	Y	98bs	20	8th lvl fear 10'radius

*Note: Skeletons are unaffected by Bleeding, and alkl Slash crits become Crush crits.

Ghouls/Slime									
Slime	6	—	110	No	10	N	54cl	-10	AT sticks: A heat crit
Water Ghouls	4	W	62	SL	20	N	68cl	10	5% disease

Random Encounters**	
1D10	Encounter (1D3 in number)
1-2	Giant, fungi-eating slugs
3-5	Wisps taht look like floating spider webs, whic feed on small insects and the like
6-8	Glow-worms or glow-beetles, whic live in the fungi and feed on other small insects
9-10	Giant stick spiders, about 3" across, taht hunt insects in the fungi

**Note: None of these cratures are dangerous, and sensible adventurers shold learn to ignore them

PRODUCT REVIEW

Phil Kime and Chris Kennedy

Palantír Quest

(Middle-earth Adventure #2009)

Charlottesville, Virginia
Iron Crown Enterprises, 1994

One of the most powerful artifacts ever to grace Middle-earth awaits Fourth Age adventurers who answer King Elessar's bidding to find a mystical palantír in ICE's first-ever campaign module, *Palantír Quest.* Also a first for an ICE publication, the module features a Fourth Age setting which requires no special preparation by the GM, since detailed scenarios present the GM with a linked series of adventures, none of which are easy to complete. As the player-characters pass through each stage of their quest, new obstacles arise, moving them closer to their ultimate goal of finding one or perhaps more of the lost Seeing-stones.

The search for the palantíri (of which a total of seven are known to exist in Endor) begins after the Gondorian seer, Tarquillan, witnesses strange visions in Minas Tirith's own Seeing-stone, which relate that one of the lost palantíri of the North has reappeared somewhere in the world. The characters are then summoned to the city for an audience with Tarquillan, who will tell all he knows about the palantíri and how the players can go about digging up clues in their search.

The presentation of material in *Palantír Quest* is lucid and allows even novice players to start playing at the first setting. So too are the descriptions of NPCs and sites vivid enough to make the GM's job simpler than usual. For instance, as seen in modules from other fantasy systems like *Dungeon & Dragons, Palantír Quest* contains descriptions highlighted in gray text which may be read aloud to the players by the GM.

Adding to the playability of the module are extensive maps and floorplans—totaling no less than 57 in number—designed by the team of James A. Fallin, Jessica Ney, Daniel Cruger, Rick Britton, and Ellisa Mitchell. Portraits of some of the important NPCs and creatures to be found along the way were provided thanks to the artistry of Fallin, Kent Buries, Storn Cook, and David Martin.

The module is not without its limitations, however few. The authors admit that experienced gamers may find some of the adventure locations familiar since they are reproduced from previously-released ICE modules. But such a potential problem can be overcome if the GM changes locations or details as needed, and in any case the inhabitants and events at all locales in *Palantír Quest* are totally unique. GMs may also find that inexperienced players will need to "keep their eyes on the prize" by not becoming too involved in sub-plots which can distract them from their ultimate goal of finding the lost palantíri. The module advises that some sort of official word from Minas Tirith may be required if players go too far astray.

Besides the many maps and illustrations, a full 33 pages of charts and tables and substantial source material are provided in the module for use with either the *MERP, Kolemaster* or *LotR Adventure* systems. Of note among the charts is a timeline of major events which keeps track of the actions of the PCs and others in the game, the timing of which will have a direct bearing on whether the PCs return to Minas Tirith with a palantír in hand or not.

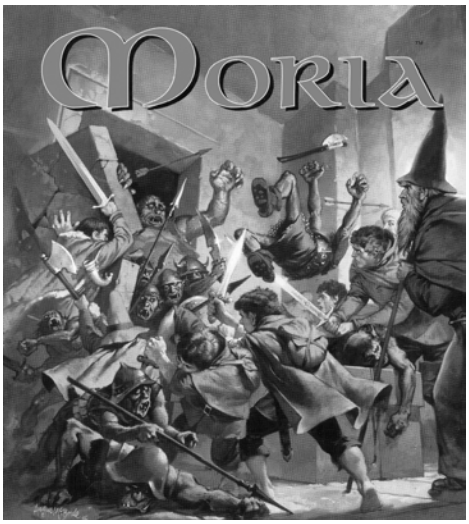
Overall, ICE has done a very credible job with the module for a first try in the campaign environment. The adventure is exciting and well-paced and should appeal greatly to those gamers who enjoy playing beyond the scope of the usual Third Age setting.

Reviewer:
Gerrit Nuckton

Peter C. Fenlon

Moria: the Black Chasm (Middle-earth Citadels #2011)

Charlottesville, Virginia
Iron Crown Enterprises Inc., 1994



Drawing from Tolkien's published texts and unfinished works, Iron Crown delivers another command performance in *Moria,* the first installment in the new and revised citadel series. Perhaps more than any other in Middle-earth, this site captures the imagination of those adventurers who would travel into a forbidding and once-forsaken realm beneath the living earth. The very site where Gandalf the Grey battled the fiery Balrog presents the foolish and immortal alike a wealth of adventure possibilities.

The new module is a reworked version of ICE's 1984 release *Moria: The Dwarven City.* Although the prose is mostly the same, several sections contain added detail. The presentation of the 1994 release is more readable, with a larger font and pull-out, color maps. In addition to an expanded adventures section, these added elements comprise the primary differences between the rwo modules, making the revision a more playable and detailed resource than its predecessor. The detail on Dwarven life and society, though somewhat skeletal, still provides the reader with the beginnings of a sourcebook for Dwarven characters and campaigns involving Dwarves.

The module opens up with a brief discussion of Moria's tumultuous history, followed by a compact and easily referenced timeline. This repository of Naugrim lore enables a gamemaster to lend greater credibility to a campaign. The land and climate sections give an excellent descriptive introduction of each region surrounding the three peaks above Moria, while the relative paucity of the flora and fauna section reflects the lack of complex plant and animal life native to Moria itself. The few lifeforms detailed within generally possess unusual or magical characteristics.

The appearance and culture of the Dwarves themselves are generally described. A section on warcraft unveils the Dwarven spirit, illuminating Naugrim ethos. Language is also given brief mention, with a list of approximately twenty-five words and their roots, accompanied by a list of Dwarven alphabetic characters. Although informative to the layman, the description of Dwarven technology remains virtually unchanged from the original module. This analysis gives a good introduction to forging techniques, but James Owen's article on "Metallurgy in the Third Age" (*OH* 4: 19-21) would supplement this section well, adding a more explicit explanation of forging methods.

The main focus of the module is of course Moria itself—its halls, chambers, and dark chasms—and the seven Deeps of Moria are described with an abundance of pictures as well as prose. Key sights throughout Khazad-dûm and the Underdeeps come alive in the descriptions and drawings. The foul creatures of Moria range from the hell-wrought Balrog down to the unclean Orc bands. Along with brief sections on each tribe, this section gives mostly combat related information. Honorable mention goes to the drawing of "Representatives of the Three Orc Tribes."

The labels given to the social organization of each creature is a most interesting point. Orcs are broken down into "tribes," each of which is further subdivided into "bands;" while Trolls, by contrast, only consist of "bands." How these distinctions are made is not quite clear, (but would make an excellent research project for a clever but foolhardy Gondorian anthropologist). The Balrog of the Black Chasm rules the forsaken "citizens" of Moria, laughing while his minions butcher one another in pathetic attempts for power.

Six full-length adventures and three shorter scenario outlines comprise the last section of the module. In all, these nine pieces provide the gamemaster with good ideas on how to incorporate Moria and Dwarves into a Middle-earth campaign in any age. Several of them base their plots around gaining (or re-gaining) some of the riches of Moria. One adventure that stands out is "The Embassy to the Dwarven King." Though the search and retrieval of lost wealth lures the foolish to venture into die Black Pits of Moria, "The Embassy" adventure provides a most interesting opportunity to become involved in the life and death struggle of Dwarven politics.

The revised module recommends itself as a resource guide to the denizens of Moria, as well as a guidebook to Khazad-dûm itself. It accomplished both with a breadth of information sufficient to cover most issues with at least enough detail to entice the reader into wanting to further explore the subject. Though this is appropriate for many sections, the reader is left hanging when it comes to Dwarven subsistence methods (a question which immediately comes to mind when reading the section on Dwarven life—how do the inhabitants feed themselves?

In the chapter on Dwarven trade, the author says that "Khazad-dûm is both self sufficient and jealously guarded (45)." By contrast, in the section on exports and imports the author says "Khazad-dûm imports a number of foodstuffs, especially grains, red meats, dairy-goods, honey, beer, and mead (ibid)." The Dwarven appetite even surpasses that of the famous Hobbits, and the meager resources of fish, fowl, mushrooms, and mountain-lentils hardly explains how Khazad-dûm could be self-sufficient, especially in times of siege.

Another point which ties in with this is how Dwarven labor is organized (except with minor explanation with regard to smithing and other related crafts). A more detailed description of how the Dwarves lived is a question that begs to be answered, but is left untended, lost in the sonorous echoes of iron and stone. Perhaps more detailed information such as this would fit nicely into a Dwarven sourcebook.

The organization of the module into thematic sections makes *Moria* a clear and useful guide to adventuring inside. The maps and drawings complement each section well, providing the reader with Iron Crown's vision of the citadel. The history section and description of races associated with Moria, the Naugrim, Orc tribes, and Trolls also make this more than just a citadel guidebook. The sections on the races contain just enough detail to want more, and I hope mat my suggestion for a Dwarven sourcebook does not fall on deaf ears. Further analysis of Dwarven politics, social organization, and language would be key elements in such a resource.

Reviewer:
Greg Bailey

Arda

Annual for Arda-research

Since 1982, a small band of Scandinavian enthusiasts from the academic world have been producing *Arda,* an occasional—It's supposed to be annual, but isn't—publication devoted to the writings ofJ.R.R. Tolkien. There are currently seven volumes of *Arda,* each of which contains a number of essays (occasionally by leading Tolkien scholars, such as Tom Shippey) and reviews of Tolkien-related events and books of the year. Each volume contains between 100 and 250 pages.

Arda is bilingual (English/Swedish), but extensive summaries are given in the language other than that used in an article. Article quality ranges from the excellent to the trivial, but many of the best actually appear in English (as mastery of that language is required of Scandinavian scholars).

Although *Arda* contains no material that is directly related to Middle-earth gaming and does not review gaming products, it may nevertheless be of interest to gamemasters seeking to enhance their campaign by venturing deeper into Tolkien's writings. Examples of such pieces include studies of Rohirrim time-reckoning *(Arda* 1982-1983), Hobbit matchmaking *(Arda* 1983-1984), distance and time calculations for Sam and Frodo's trek through Cirith Ungol *(Arda* 1986), the cosmology of Middle-earth and the nature of Beorn *(Arda* 1987).

As postage and exchange rates vary (US airmail for a single volume may range anywhere from $ 10 to $20), it is best to inquire about prices directly from the editor:

***Arda, c/o* Anders Stenström**
Stiernhielmsgatan 5B, S-753 33 Uppsala, Sweden

OTHER HANDS

The International Journal for Middle-earth Gaming